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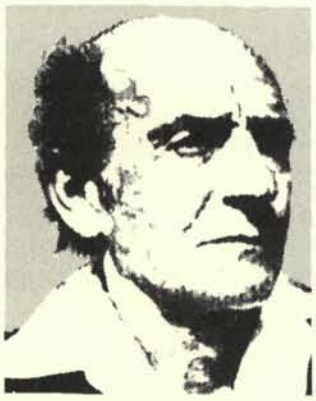

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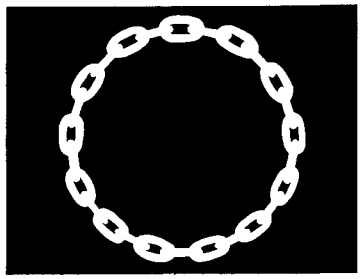

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The Despairing Optimist

RENÉ DUBOS

Is there any hope for civilization? Can the world survive? During the past few decades, more and more people have answered these questions with a resounding *No*. Pervasive pessimism is not a new phenomenon, of course. During all periods of history, there have been people who believed that their time was out of joint, that all coherence was gone. Contemporary pessimism, however, goes far beyond this traditional worry about the state of affairs. Its new aspect is the *assumption* that our descendants will be even worse off than we are because the world will have become too complex for comprehension by the human brain. I am not interested in this assumption because it was just as true in the past as it is today. On the other hand, there is no need for scientific study to predict what will happen if the present growth rates of world population, industrialization, and pollution are maintained for a few more decades.

The earth will be overcrowded and its resources depleted. Pollution will ruin the environment, upset the climate, dim our vision, and rot our lungs. The gap in living standards between rich and poor countries will widen and lead the angry, hungry people of the world to acts of desperation including the use of nuclear weapons as blackmail. Economic affluence also has its drawbacks. It commonly spoils human relationships and creates forms of environmental degradation that increasingly damage the physical and biological quality of the globe as a whole, for the simple reason that most pollutants spread far beyond their points of emission.

If the present trends of exponential growth continue, the future will look dismal indeed for humankind and for the earth; but what a big *if* this is. Except on the graphs of mathematicians and computer scientists, growth curves never remain exponential for many years—not even in the case of rabbit populations, or of American business corporations. In nature, the excessive growth of any population almost automatically brings into play opposing forces that eventually make the system self-correcting; ecological equilibrium is the outcome of such homeostatic processes. In human affairs, the spontaneous self-correcting mechanisms of nature are supplemented by deliberate social interventions. Human beings are not likely to remain passive when they become aware of trends they do not like. Admittedly, their interventions are not always wise, but they inevitably change the course of events, and make a mockery of any attempt to predict the future from extrapolation of existing trends. Wherever human beings are concerned, trend is not destiny.

During the early euphoric phase of the industrial revolution, it was almost universally believed that the result of industrial growth would be the betterment of human life, and that the earth was spacious enough and rich enough in resources to accommodate any growth of the human species and of human ambitions. For a while, it was almost taken for granted that the year 2000 would be the dawn of a technological Utopia, but the public mood is beginning to change. It has become painfully obvious that the world's population cannot safely exceed a level much higher than the present one, and that many dangers inevitably follow the undisciplined growth of industry. The awareness that there are inescapable limits to quantitative growth rapidly spread from a few specialists to the

RENÉ DUBOS is professor emeritus at the Rockefeller University and is the author of *A God Within* and *Beast or Angel? Choices That Make Us Human*.

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general public during the 1960s, generating an explosion of concern for what came to be called, vaguely, the quality of human life and of the environment. The official expression of this concern was the United Nations' Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972, which was soon followed by the creation of international and national agencies focused on aspects of environmental problems.

The various programs for environmental control are so new that most of them are still in a clumsy formative stage and provide easy ground for criticism. According to some critics, they have not been sufficiently vigorous to be really effective. According to other critics, they are objectionable because they interfere with industrial progress—a phrase commonly used to mean continuing the quantitative development of industry along lines known to be economically profitable whatever their drawbacks and their long-range dangers.

One of the easiest and cheapest ways to appear socially sophisticated these days is to dismiss the advocates of environmental control as eco-freaks or as anti-technologists—to use the unimaginative expression of a simplistic article in a recent issue of *Harper's* magazine. Since I have been mentioned as one of the five most influential anti-technologists of our time (to my great surprise, as I have repeatedly argued that much of civilization depends upon the development of new imaginative technologies), I shall briefly outline here some aspects of the campaign for environmental control in modern industrial societies. I shall point to some of the constructive results of this campaign that are contributing even now to the emergence of a new technological philosophy in which industrial growth is made subservient to human and ecological considerations.

In 1933, the city of Chicago held a World's Fair focused on the contributions of scientific technology to human welfare. The organizers of the fair believed, as was then the general view, that progress could be identified with industrial growth. They naïvely expressed their faith in the guidebook prepared for the occasion: "Science finds, industry applies, man *conforms*. . . . Individuals, groups, entire races of men *fall into step* . . . with science and industry" (italics mine). These statements are of historical importance because they provide a point of comparison from which to judge the change of attitude that has occurred during the past four decades. The advocates for a better human environment start from an attitude concerning the relationship between technology and humankind that is exactly opposite to that expressed in the guidebook to the 1933 World's Fair. In their opinion, technology can continue to move forward and to be lastingly successful only to the extent that *it* conforms to human needs and aspirations, not vice versa. A measure of their success is that they have created a psychological atmosphere in which it would now be socially unacceptable, and indeed shocking, to state that humankind must fall into step with industry and conform to technological imperatives.

An essential necessity for the humanization of the technological enterprise is to recognize the dangers inherent in any kind of excessive growth, and especially of undisciplined industrial growth. Fortunately the prospects are rather hopeful in this regard, thanks to the social attitude that is progressively emerging from the concern for a better human environment.

Until our time, disasters caught the world by surprise, and it was therefore difficult, if not impossible, to control their manifestations. In contrast, modern societies are beginning to develop methods for anticipating future upheavals, whether of natural or man-made origin. The long-range effects to be expected from social or technological innovations are now discussed long before the event, especially if there is any likelihood that these effects might be dangerous. One of the beneficial results of the campaign for a better environment has been to foster studies that will help to prevent, or at least to minimize and rapidly correct, the environmental damage caused by industry. Clumsy and difficult to administer as it is, the legislation that makes it necessary to file a statement of "environmental impact" before undertaking any large-scale project is a first step in a direction that will certainly be followed in the future.

It is admittedly difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine completely in advance the "environmental impact" of human interventions into natural and social systems; but

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it is certain nevertheless that much of the damage that was done in the past could have been prevented if environmental awareness had been as widespread as it is now becoming. A few examples will suffice to illustrate the wide range of changes that have taken place in technological development as a result of environmental awareness.

Industrial growth has long been considered desirable, because of its contribution to health and happiness, for the creation of wealth, or simply for its own sake. Until recent times, progress was indeed identified with quantitative growth. In contrast, modern societies have begun to question the desirability of certain innovations that are technologically feasible and economically profitable, but that have undesirable social aspects. The shelving of the SST is a case in point, and so is the delay in the development of various nuclear technologies for the production of energy—such as the breeder reactor. The evaluation of potential long-range dangers for human beings and for the environment is becoming one of the crucial factors in the formulation of technological policies.

The partial banning of pesticides exemplifies a situation in which a technology that had first been accepted with enthusiasm was brought under strict control once its dangers had been recognized. Even more striking is the case of the fluorocarbons used in spray containers. There are some indications that these substances might be directly harmful to human beings, and also indirectly harmful through possible effects on the ozone layer of the atmosphere. Although the information concerning the magnitude of these effects is still uncertain, and although there is as yet no legislation controlling the uses of fluorocarbons, the sale of spray cans has greatly decreased and several industrial firms are putting other kinds of spray pumps on the market.

These examples, and many others that could be cited, are evidence of a rather new attitude in the modern world: the willingness to abandon policies and practices that are technologically possible and economically profitable but socially objectionable. The symbolic importance of such reversals is that they are caused, not by political upheavals or scientific breakthroughs, but by public awareness of environmental consequences.

The social attitude toward innovations can undergo rapid changes even while these innovations are still in the stage of scientific or cultural development. Witness the heated controversies and progressive evolution of views about genetic engineering and behavioral control, despite the paucity of evidence that effective techniques will soon—if ever—be developed for the manipulation of genes or of behavior on a population scale.

Perhaps most interesting in the long run are the indications of reversals of attitudes concerning the role of human beings in various technologies. Up to now, one of the explicit ideals of technological civilization has been to substitute machines for human beings wherever possible. At first, this policy had the advantage of increasing industrial productivity; then, progressively, machines proved more efficient than human beings in most industrial operations. It is now becoming apparent, however, that the unreasonable use of Western technology often creates conditions that are inimical to the expression of human resourcefulness and creativity. Gandhi's saying that the future of India is not in mass production but in production by the masses may have meaning for the Western world as well. The human tragedies resulting from unemployment may lead industrial societies to rediscover that, except for the dullest, most repetitive, and painful tasks, human beings are better than machines—and certainly more creative.

One of the characteristics of our time evident in practically all fields of human endeavor is the rapidity with which steps can be taken to impose a new orientation on social and technological trends, once public opinion has been alerted to their potential consequences. It is worthy of note, in passing, that the direction of trends at any given time is more influenced by grass-roots movements than by official directives. They are less a result of conventional education than of the widespread awareness generated by concerned citizen groups and by the news media.

Phrases such as "limits to growth" and "anti-technological movement" lose much of their disturbing and somewhat frightening connotations when read in the light of the changes that are now occurring in social attitudes. It is obvious of course that all forms of

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growth have limits from the *quantitative* point of view; it is certain also that protests will continue against *certain* types of technology. These limits and protests, however, correspond to a desire for *qualitative* change rather than to a rejection of development. The forms in which growth takes place are continuously undergoing evolution, just as do all the manifestations of life.

One of the most remarkable achievements of the campaigns conducted by those who have been castigated as eco-freaks or anti-technologists is that the opportunity to live in a good environment is coming to be regarded as one of our "unalienable" rights, along with the rights to freedom, to education, and to some form of medical care. A good environment, furthermore, means not only conditions that are favorable to the maintenance of physical health, but also certain emotional and aesthetic qualities of the surroundings. These criteria, which are very different from those that governed quantitative industrial growth in the past, are likely to generate new forms of growth in which the quality of life will take precedence over the quantity of goods produced.

Such a change of attitude will certainly lead to the downgrading of certain technologies and resources, and will foster the development of others that are of little importance today. Belching smokestacks were regarded as a sign of prosperity during the first phase of the industrial revolution; they are now read as evidence of poor technological management and of social irresponsibility. There are no visible limits to the kind of growth associated with qualitative changes, because social evolution is endlessly inventive of new resources and new technologies that can be developed to achieve the goals imagined by the new mentality.

While I have emphasized those aspects of modern societies that give reason for hope in the future, I am aware of other aspects that create a sense of alarm—for example, the distressing human tendency to pursue innovations as far as possible, indeed to the point of absurdity. Awareness of long-range consequences does not imply that modern societies will always be willing to change their course early enough to avoid the deleterious effects inherent in most rampant technologies.

There is also the danger that in some situations the societies' response will not be rapid enough to warn of dangers in time, and to prevent crucial processes from overshooting and ending in catastrophes. In fact, catastrophic declines following overshoot are not peculiar to industrial societies. The ancient civilizations of the Near East, and later those of the Maya and the Khmer people, probably came to an end through some process of environmental degradation caused by overshoot. Fortunately, what is known concerning the phenomenal resiliency of biological and social systems now makes it easier to deal with this problem and therefore not to be overpowered by the myth of inevitability.

There are two kinds of prophets of doom. On the one hand, there are the pessimists who feel that humankind is on a course of self-destruction; on the other hand, there are those, falsely called optimists, who affirm that technological Utopia will soon be reached if we continue moving along the industrial road we have been traveling during the past century.

The pessimists serve a useful social function. By publicizing the dangers of our present practices, they sensitize the general public to the likelihood of catastrophes and thus create an awareness that makes it possible to reverse dangerous trends. In contrast, the tunnel-vision optimists are the unimaginative architects of disaster. By visualizing the future as a mere extrapolation of present trends, with more and more of the same, only bigger and faster, they encourage society to follow a suicidal course.

In my opinion, the difficulties of our time, or of any time, are not reasons for discouragement. History shows that crises usually foster renewal and herald new phases of creativeness, different from the past. The most interesting characteristic of human beings is that they can transcend social as well as biological determinism. Animals are almost completely prisoners of biological evolution, but human beings are blessed with the freedom and inventiveness of social evolution. They can retrace their steps and start on a new course whenever they see danger ahead; they can integrate the raw materials of the earth, with the knowledge derived from past experience and from new learning, in a continuous evolutionary process of creation.

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Life and Letters

Incidental Meditations

ARISTIDES

Does anyone in America like his or her life? I assume not many people do, basing this assumption on the peculiar quality of the apparently endless stream of how-to books that continue to appear in our country. There can, after all, be no thriving how-to literature unless there is a furious want-to feeling abroad in the land. What people want, this literature indicates, is to change their lives. Whereas our earlier how-to literature featured succeeding and getting on in the world—from Benjamin Franklin's *The Way to Wealth* through Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*—our current how-to literature features learning how to cope with life through solving our problems. While the former was crudely moral in tone, the tone of the latter is almost exclusively psychological. Every day and in every way, these books cumulatively postulate, we are getting worse and worse. But help is at hand. These books promise to save our marriages or make easier our divorces, redeem our children, give meaning to our work, enhance our sex lives, and withal bring us through the valley of the shadow of anomie to the gates of the heavenly city here on earth, over which, in neon, is spelled out the single word—fulfillment.

If these books are any reflection of the quality of our lives, we are in one hell of a shape. We have problems. We have the problem of child rearing and the problem of aging, the problem of youth and the problem of dying. In between we have the problems of marriage, family, and sex. Then there are the problem of work and the problem of leisure. This is not to speak of the problems of adjustment of various kinds, the special problems of women, and the problem of retirement, nor of the problems somewhat more external to us: of politics, technology, ecology. So many problems, indeed, there seems little time left over for living. They are a problem, no doubt about it, these problems.

How did all these problems—the problem problem, so to say—come about? Difficult to say. A question of the chicken-or-the-egg kind is involved. Which came first—the Oedipus complex or Dr. Freud, bad sex or Dr. David Reuben urging us that so much better sex awaits our mastering his catechism? Is life substantively worse, more problem-ridden, now than ever before? Or is it that, life having become substantively better, we now have more time to devote to our problems? Is democracy to blame for imbuing people with an inflated sense of their possibilities? One cannot, for example, suffer the problem of feeling powerless if one does not believe oneself entitled to feel powerful to begin with. Has industrial capitalism caused the withering away of the old supports: the family, the neighborhood, the church? Whatever is the cause, whoever is to blame, the important fact is that many good and intelligent people feel themselves sinking under the weight of their problems, and life generally seems less good.

Yet one cannot help wondering to what extent our suffering is linked to the way we perceive all our various problems. Whether or not they have read Freud or others of the Viennese delegation, the way most people nowadays perceive their problems, indeed their lives generally, is in the therapeutic mode. A few years ago Philip Rieff, the sociologist and interpreter of the works of Sigmund Freud, wrote a book with the prophetic title of *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*. I say "prophetic" because it now seems obvious that the therapeutic, as a mode of viewing

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the world and one's own place in it, has completely triumphed, and in America at present we are living in a state of unconditional surrender to it. With the aid of therapeutic ideas and notions, we are able to cultivate our problems with a refinement perhaps unknown to any other nation in history. We have become connoisseurs of grievance—one nation problematical, with anxiety and aggravation for all.

What is the therapeutic mode of perceiving the world? In its broadest lineaments, it is seated in the interior, a view that what is most significant in life is played out in one's mind. Played out is accurate, for the therapeutic mode provides those who adopt it a way of dramatizing their lives. Its key metaphors are turmoil, crisis, struggle, and breakthrough: Oedipal turmoil, identity crisis, struggle between id and superego, conscious and unconscious, Eros and Thanatos. The breakthrough, the denouement in this drama, if it arrives, is greater self-knowledge, awareness, growth, fulfillment. Men have availed themselves of other dramas—the Jewish messianic drama, the Protestant drama of salvation—but the therapeutic drama as generally conceived is notable in being a play with a cast of one: one's self.

The chief playwright in the therapeutic drama was of course Sigmund Freud, and in *Civilization and Its Discontents* he left very clear stage instructions that it is to be played with tragic overtones. The road company version that has appeared in America, however, has largely ignored these instructions, and the script has been played in a rewritten version that has a happy ending. Much speculative thought has been lavished on why Freudianism and the therapeutic mode have caught on in the United States as nowhere else. No reason has ever seemed as persuasive as that they are particularly well suited to the American belief in personal progress and the endless alterability of character—a belief simultaneously responsible for much of our stupidity and much of our decency. Ours is preeminently the country of the second chance—and the third and the fourth and the fifth. As the game is not over till the gun goes off, so in America our character, our life, is still deemed reformable so long as we draw breath. What makes the therapeutic mode so appealing is precisely that it holds out hope for personal change. Freud wrote: "Much is won if we succeed in transforming hysterical misery into common unhappiness." Here in America we have read him to mean that happiness is just around the corner.

Not that the therapeutic mode has wanted for detractors, who over the years have come not only from philistine but from intellectual quarters. Karl Kraus led the Viennese opposition in writing: "The relation between psychiatrists and other kinds of lunatic is more or less the relation of a convex folly to a concave one." Vladimir Nabokov, who sees the determinism inherent in the therapeutic enterprise as repugnant to the artistic enterprise, has said: "Let the credulous and the vulgar continue to believe that all mental woes can be cured by a daily application of old Greek myths to their private parts. I really do not care." Opinion about psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, and psychologists today seems a highly mixed one. In one of their aspects, they are our secular priests, consulted on matters private and public, minor and major alike; but in another of their aspects they are figures of fun, incompetents blinkered by obtuse doctrine, even slightly charlatan. A winning television situation comedy, "The Bob Newhart Show," features a psychologist who is decent but clearly bumbling and ineffectual; in this show, the very idea of psychotherapy is itself treated as situation comedy. Even people who are in therapy of one kind or another are frequently ironic about it. In the work of Woody Allen, so much of which is psychoanalytic in inspiration, irony mounts to hilarity.

Still, the efficacy of the therapeutic mode is not in doubt. People who have undergone psychotherapy of one kind or another insist that it has changed their lives. Some say that it has in fact saved their lives. Others maintain that talking to a therapist has brought welcome surcease from oppressive problems. Who can refute such claims? Who, moreover, can refute that the findings of psychiatry, along with those of psycho-pharmacology, have improved enormously the treatment of the psychotic, the tempering of the neurotic, and the running of institutions for the mentally ill? It is owing to such findings that the days of dank dungeons and the dish under

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the door for the insane are over, and that is something to be grateful for.

Yet what of the effect of these same psychological findings—the large theories and the small scraps of information—on the conduct of everyday life? If modern psychology has in many instances made the neurotic well, in how many others has it made the well neurotic? This cannot of course be known. What can is that psychology, the therapeutic mode, has permeated nearly every aspect of public and private life in our time. In the public realm, most social movements in recent years have been, or soon become, therapeutic in their demands. The civil rights movement became therapeutic at exactly that moment when it ceased to talk of legal and economic problems and took up "Black is beautiful" as one of its chief slogans. The movements on behalf of women and homosexuals, once each affixed the word "liberation" to its cause, staked out demands that are largely therapeutic as well, making clear that it is liberation from a psychologically repressed status that they seek. Much of the talk about ethnicity soon shades off into the therapeutic, with group identity the main theme.

In the private realm, the influence of the therapeutic mode has been at once more subtle and more pervasive. It has infiltrated the modern vocabulary and taken over wide areas of modern thought. It has made analysts of us all, searching literature, our friends, our selves for motives and the wizardry of the unconscious at its devious work. In a speech at a dinner in Vienna honoring Sigmund Freud on his eightieth birthday, Thomas Mann correctly cited Freud as an "artist of thought, like Schopenhauer, and like him a writer of the European rank." "Freud is of the opinion," Mann added, "that the significance of psychoanalysis as a science of the unconscious will in the future far outrank its value as a therapeutic method." Mann thought that this new science would result in a "humanism of the future," in a "wise and freer humanity"—"freed from fear and hate, and ripe for peace." In short, by eating from this new tree of knowledge we were to be returned to Eden.

Mann's speech was delivered in 1936. Thirty-odd years later, in *Mr. Sammler's Planet,* Saul Bellow has a character say to Artur Sammler: "I'm convinced that knowing the names of things braces people up. I've gone to shrinkers for years, and have they cured me of anything? They have not. They've put labels on my troubles, though, which sound like knowledge. It's a great comfort and worth the money. You say 'I'm manic.' Or you say 'I'm a reactive-depressive.'. . . Then the dullest brain has internal fireworks, and the sparks drive you out of your skull. It's divine. You think you're a new man."

At a minimum, after confronting Freud in any of his major works, the tendency is to think oneself a different man. Thomas Mann said of the analytic revelation that "once aroused and on the alert, it cannot be put to sleep again," and how accurate that statement is. Having recently read Freud's *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life,* I am convinced that one of its effects is to make everyday life more psychopathological. That book, it will be recalled, is the one in which Freud takes up such matters as forgetting, slips of the tongue, misreadings and slips of the pen, bungled actions, errors, and other parapraxes, or faulty functions, among people not otherwise psychically troubled. Made up for the most part of small case studies, instances of everyday behavior—many of them observed by Freud, and others reported by his psychoanalytic cohorts—the book is by and large not one of Freud's better performances. Still, it is Freud's, and therefore has much peripheral wisdom to convey, such as that contained in his analogy between the screen memories of childhood and the store of myths and legends of its early days that a nation acquires as it grows older.

"You Freudians," Freud records a lady saying to his colleague Ferenczi, "will go on looking for the causes of insanity till you're insane yourselves." Much that appears patent madness is in these pages. "*In every case,*" writes Freud, after citing a number of examples of forgetting, "*the forgetting turned out to be based on a motive of unpleasure,*" and later, "nothing is ever mislaid except as a result of unconscious intention." Of the quite commonly bungled action in which one tries to step around someone approaching on a sidewalk, then that person steps the same way, so that one is engaged with a stranger in a comic

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minuet, Freud remarks that here "behind a mask of clumsiness, [one] pursues sexual aims." Not only is losing objects ascribed to psychological motives, but, according to Otto Rank, "also *finding* them appears to be [psychologically] determined." No move is arbitrary or random; there are no accidents.

Freud is almost everywhere a brilliantly clever polemicist—he had, after all, an extraordinary case to make—and is therefore sometimes quite difficult to pin down. Often he will make bold statements, only later to send in sentries of qualification to guard them. But in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* he is quite clear on the point of our actions being determined. "If we give way to the view that a part of our psychical functioning cannot be explained by purposive ideas," he writes, "we are failing to appreciate the extent of determination in mental life." And he ends his book on everyday slips and forgetting and small errors by writing: *"the phenomenon can be traced back to incompletely suppressed psychical material, which, although pushed away by consciousness, has nevertheless not been robbed of all capacity of expressing itself."* Case closed.

Part of Freud's genius is in his extraordinary power of suggestiveness. Of one of the cases mentioned in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, an instance of symptomatic acts, Freud reports: "I had been telling the patient about such chance or symptomatic acts only the evening before. She thereupon took the first opportunity of producing something analogous." If a great teacher is one who sets others off on his own train of thought, then Freud is probably the greatest teacher of all time. No one provides a more entrancing—if not always enchanting—ride. After reading the chapter in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* on "Forgetting Proper Names," I turned on the television set for the evening news, whereupon a singer appeared doing a commercial for Burlington Industries. I knew this singer's name very well, but could not, no matter how strenuous my efforts, bring it to mind. Only hours later was I able to recall that her name is Petula Clark. Significance please? Miss Clark does not even faintly resemble my mother, and I have no sisters, so perhaps it would be best to rule out incest taboos from the start. Miss Clark once made a successful recording of a song entitled "Downtown." I do not go downtown much any more. Ought I to? Is there some dark secret connected with downtown that I am repressing? My dentist is downtown, but I do not need the help of my unconscious to repress him. This little incident of forgetting could take years in the unraveling. What, I wonder, would be the significance of my forgetting the whole thing, which I most certainly intend to do?

Because psychotherapy over the past twenty or so years has been so popular among the middle classes, perhaps everyone who is among those classes has heard, or told, wondrous stories about their own or other people's therapeutic adventures. My own favorite—told to me at third or fourth hand, and hence possibly apocryphal—has to do with a famous American sculptor and an equally famous psychoanalyst. The sculptor had recently been divorced, was in heavy debt, and found himself in a terrible general funk, which he sought to alleviate through the ministrations of the psychoanalyst. When he called at the analyst's office, the analyst invited him to join him on his habitual postprandial walk in a nearby park, where he, the sculptor, might tell him about his problems. Upon their return, at the entrance to his office, the analyst said to the sculptor: "My dear sir, it strikes me that you have two reigning problems. The first is that you need a woman. The second is that you need money. I am afraid that I am able to aid you with neither. So let us say good-day here, and I wish you all good luck."

What I like about this story, I do not mind admitting, is its antitherapeutic bias. What I find appealing about it is its frank admission that not all human problems are linked to childhood memories, sexual complications, or one form or another of repression. It also somewhat obliquely incorporates the thought in a sentence by Cesare Pavese that I find most interesting but to which I am not sure many people would any longer lend their assent: "One ceases to be a child when one realizes that telling one's troubles does not make them any better." As for why I have come to hold an antitherapeutic bias, the reasons are many, but chief among them is my belief that the therapeutic mode does not now

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come anywhere near achieving its own pretensions to explaining the totality of human experience. I would go further to say that it is helpless to explain what is most interesting in human experience.

Imagine, then, my immense pleasure at discovering my bias against the therapeutic mode more sharply formulated than I could ever hope to formulate it and having it done in a book by, of all people, a practicing academic psychologist. The book is *Human Beings* by Liam Hudson (Doubleday-Anchor). Although more than solely a debunking performance, Professor Hudson's book is most impressive on the attack—best at pointing out what really is not known. Of psychological research to date he writes: "The contours are there, we feel, all the outward signs. But the sense of fabric itself, its real stuff and substance, is missing." What is most sorely missing, in both the Freudian and the behavioristic psychological models, is any convincing account of the concepts of will and imagination. Will and imagination, the factors responsible for heroism, altruism, and art, among much else, are surely two of the most important elements in life, yet in modern psychology both are, implicitly and sometimes explicitly, degraded: will being chalked off to determinism and imagination to sublimated fantasy.

Ought we, for example, to regard Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's conduct as a classic case of revolt from an authoritarian father (Stalin)? Was not Nadezhda Mandelstam, in carrying around in her head for decades her husband Osip's poems—the sublimated products of his fantasies—acting out the traditionally subservient role of women? What of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, or for that matter Sigmund Freud's, courage in the teeth of adversity—can these be adequately accounted for by a psychological analysis of their childhoods, sexualities, even genetic inheritances? The therapeutic mode makes not only evil but heroism banal. Here I am reminded of a passage from André Malraux's *The Walnut Trees of Altenberg:*

> "Essentially a man is what he hides. . ."
>
> Walter shrugged his shoulders and brought his hands together like a child making a mud pie.
>
> "A man is what he does!" my father answered sharply.

If the therapeutic mode can make the heroic seem banal, it often makes ordinary human suffering seem positively trivial. Anyone of any intelligence who has gone through any form of personal upheaval in this country in recent years—divorce, difficulties with children, the death of someone loved—cannot but feel the sting of triviality visited upon his very real problems by the therapeutic mode. Whatever one's suffering, a psychologist stands ready to explain it (or explain it away), several books have been written about it, an article on it has appeared in one of the Sunday supplements, *Time* or *Newsweek* has done it up in a brisk six hundred words. After hearing them often enough, one eventually becomes hostage to certain psychological clichés. A man's wife divorces him, and he accounts for it as the result of the "liberation thing." A woman loses a husband after forty years of marriage, and for more than a year afterward breaks into tears at odd moments, which her children, of the therapeutically enlightened generation, diagnose as "the widow syndrome." Thus do forty years of life go up in the smoke of a cheap little phrase.

The psychologist's job, as Professor Hudson puts it, "is to make sense of people's biographies." But one nowadays wonders if psychologists have not made rather too much sense of them—like a Chinese laundry of the mind, boiling out the stains and flattening life's interesting wrinkles. Not only has psychology in its application to daily life succeeded in divesting life of much of its rich complication, but it has gone further to persuade people of the truth of its rather crude simplicities. Professor Hudson remarks that "while psychologists may have had little direct experimental influence over what people do, there can be not the slightest doubt that we have contributed in a massive way to what they believe." Psychologists, both academic and clinical, are in his view "engaged in psychic engineering: in the alteration of human consciousness."

Engineering is apt from another vantage, and this is as a reflection of the industrialization of psychology, and hence of the therapeutic mode of viewing the world, that has taken place in the United States in recent years. We have in America what can only

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be called a discontent industry. Psychoanalytic institutes, psychologists of various schools in various kinds of private practice, the strange cluster of the desperately hopeful gathered under the banner of the human potential movement, transcendental meditation centers—these are but a handful of the psychic comfort stations dotted across our nation. A recent book on marriage counseling, *The Marriage Savers* by Joanne and Lew Koch (Coward, McCann & Geoghegan), discusses, among other therapeutic techniques used by marriage counselors, bioenergetics, psychodramas, transactional analysis, kin network therapy, group sex therapy, encounter groups, and sex surrogates. Then there are the books offering every possible psychological nostrum from Nena and George O'Neill's *Open Marriage* (Evans) to (a recent offering) Jerry Greenwald's *Creative Intimacy* (Simon & Schuster). The discontent industry, like the auto industry, offers something for every taste and budget. How much money is spent annually on discontent in the United States is not known, but it must be considerable. As advertising used to be credited with creating new needs, one now wonders if the discontent industry does not have a stake in creating new problems. With the economy in the shape it is in, one wonders, too, if we can afford much in the way of contentment.

It would be nice to think that one can remain aloof from all this, not participating in it in any way, but enjoying the spectacle, the circus quality of it all, with a fine Menckenesque disdain. But such disdain does not figure to work for long; the therapeutic mode has seeped too deeply into public and private life for it not to influence us all. What is the appropriate response to books and articles and personal conversations that postulate that our technology is symbolic of our national death wish, or that the assassination of political leaders in America is an obvious acting out of the wish to murder the father? How is one to react when told by one's child's school guidance counselor that perhaps the girl is "role- as opposed to goal-oriented"? What say to the blather of therapeutic language that clogs public discourse and private talk, with words like "meaningful," "growthful," "identity crisis," and "relate to" spattering the walls. So much garbage in the air, yet no one moves to turn off the fans.

A common thread runs through much of this, and though it can perhaps be traced back to Rousseau and Nietzsche (who once referred to himself as "the first psychologist of Europe") it is unmistakable in Freud, and much more so among the workers in the therapeutic vineyards who have followed him. The common thread is the idea that people are essentially driven rather than driving, acted upon rather than active agents in their own destinies. In Freud it is the unconscious that is driving us. In others who have taken Freud's ideas over into social and political realms, it is institutions or technology or history that is doing the driving. Having these ideas dinned into us with sufficient regularity, most of us are ready to turn over the wheel.

Meanwhile, many reach out for each new set of therapeutic safety belts that is put on the market: assertiveness training, alpha wave control, biorhythms, transcendental meditation, scientology, Erhard Seminar Training (EST). The books roll out: *The High-Fibre Way to Total Health, The Bhagavad Gita for Daily Living, The Handbook to Higher Consciousness, People-Reading—How We Control Others, How They Control Us, From Sad to Glad, Positive Prayers for Powerful Living, Death: The Final Stage of Growth*—you name it, kid, we got it. What is more, so long as the therapeutic mode rides supreme, we can expect a lot more of it.

In discussing what he describes as "essential tensions," Professor Hudson writes: "To conceive of them [tensions] within the quasi-technological rhetoric of 'problem-solving' is to abandon whatever purchase upon them we might possess. The belief, implicit in the idea of progress, that a good life lies ahead of us—a good life that is our rightful inheritance and that we can reach by solving our problems—seems to me a specious fiction." The point is not that the problems we live with are not real—they often are, crushingly so—it is that the therapeutic mode so frequently trivializes them, that in many of its contemporary aspects the therapeutic mode is itself part of the problem.

Part of what is required is a lowering of the national consciousness, a slipping

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away from the therapeutic mode. When it is possible to do so, what a relief it is to throw the ideas of the therapeutic mode off. The other day a friend, after detailing the habitually wretched behavior of a colleague, remarked, in psychological extenuation of this behavior, that of course he had had a terribly troubled childhood. "If his childhood was so troubled," I found myself replying, "why doesn't he consider growing up?" But old habits die hard. Freud said that to "interpret one's dreams demands a high degree of self-discipline." To extricate oneself from the assumptions of the therapeutic mode, so long and so deeply ingrained in modern life have they become, perhaps requires even more.

We might commence with language. Wherever possible, replace the word "guilt" with "conscience," "personality" with "character." Banish "syndrome," "latent," and "complex." "Fulfillment" and "creative," in their therapeutic usages, would make fine subtractions. Once upon a time it could be said, as Sir Maurice Bowra put it, that the ideas of the therapeutic mode "gave a new dimension to talk about character and behavior." But that was in the 1920s. It is no longer so. They have become boring, if not otiose. Bad language partly got us into this; perhaps straight language can help get us out.

In a quite mindless book by Adam Smith entitled *Powers of the Mind* (Random House), I came across another aid to releasing oneself from bondage to the therapeutic mode. The author directed my attention to the work of one Herbert Benson, M.D., associate professor at the Harvard Medical School and director of the hypertension section of Boston's Beth Israel Hospital. Dr. Benson has devised a method of having his high blood pressure patients sit in a comfortable position in a quiet place while breathing through the nose and repeating a one-syllable word of their own choosing for a period of twenty minutes twice daily. Apparently, this almost unfailingly brings down blood pressure, and in the process creates a welcome feeling of restfulness. Dr. Benson has published his findings in a modest little book entitled *The Relaxation Response* (Morrow).

Although I do not have high blood pressure, I have been doing Dr. Benson's exercise off and on for roughly the past two months, and I find it, as advertised, refreshingly restful. I would estimate that it has changed my life by as much as .008 percent, though possibly I overestimate. The relaxation response is a spin-off of sorts from the technique used in transcendental meditation, minus the $125 fee and the mystical trappings involved in the latter. Having no hunger for mystical experience, life at the quotidian being mysterious enough for me, I call my adaptation of Dr. Benson's technique Incidental Meditation, and use the time allotted for it to think about exclusively pleasant things. Sitting in a comfortable wing chair, my feet on a coffee table, doing my breathing, I think about autumn leaves burning at dusk, a tranquil green lake in Wisconsin, gulls in flight, birch trees, a tennis court in the rain, a puppy bounding, lofty spiral passes thrown by a chubby thirteen-year-old named Bobby Rubenstein, William Hazlitt's gravestone upon which is engraved the words "Contented and Grateful," landscapes in England, herds of giraffes cantering off into the distance.

Although all thoughts in the therapeutic mode are outlawed from these restful reveries, the mind being a great wanderer, as one of the famous mystics once put it, on occasion Dr. Freud drops in for a visit. He sets down his umbrella, takes a seat on the couch across from my wing chair, and lights up a cigar. We fall into easy conversation. "So," he says, "tell me, is this true about there being sex surrogates in California?" It is true, I tell him. "Sex surrogates," he says, "women who sleep with men for money under the aegis of the therapeutic! In Vienna they had a different name for such women. . . . And what about this organization, EST?" he asks. "Is it true they will not allow people out of the room, once their sessions begin, not even to relieve themselves?" "It is true, or so I have read, Doctor." After answering other of his questions about additional bizarreries performed in the name of the therapeutic, Dr. Freud begins softly to sob. "It did not have to be like this," he says. "The idea was to relieve misery, not to enact such pathetic clownishness." In my reverie, I go over to him and pat him gently on the shoulder, murmuring, "There, there, Doctor, there, there." But try though I do, I cannot bring myself to lie to him and say, "None of this is your fault."

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Intellectuals and Their Discontents

EDWARD SHILS

THERE IS A PECULIAR PARADOX in the politics of large numbers of contemporary American intellectuals. They are "agin" the government. They have not, despite their momentary love affair with the dignity of the legislative branch during the investigations arising from the Watergate incident, become any more reconciled to politicians than they were in the time of H. L. Mencken and Edmund Wilson—or than they have been ever since Henry Adams. They distrust the executive branch, too. They support every effort to force its activities into the light of day because they have no confidence in what it would do in secrecy. They deny its right to the obedience of its citizenry. The theory of sovereignty has practically disappeared from the popular subject of political philosophy, and legitimacy is spoken about mainly when it is said that the government has lost it. Even those who are more measured usually think that the government is doing the wrong thing; when it does the right thing, it does it in the wrong way. They denounce "bureaucratization," which they see as a manifestation of the wrong course taken by modern civilization. Few university graduates think of the civil service as a career on the level with the law, or medicine, or scientific research, or university and college teaching—or even private business. Most of these attitudes are carried along by an old tradition; attitudes expressed in a more recent idiom are no more than variations on an old theme.

Contemporary American intellectuals are on the whole not cynical about public things. They have great expectations. They believe that the government is a fit instrument for the achievement of the worthiest goals of human beings. They believe that its capacities are limitless. There is no injustice it cannot rectify. There is no evil it cannot undo. There is no good it cannot achieve. These attitudes are of more recent birth.

With all their cynicism about the present state of American society, its squalor and injustice, these intellectuals are, when it comes down to it, utopians. They think that all that is unsatisfactory is curable, and they think that it lies within the capacities of the American government

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to bring about the cure. They might denounce affluence in their own society—although they do not find it disagreeable for themselves—but they measure the shortcomings of their own society by its departure from the norm of affluence. They think this norm can be attained for all mankind; it is simply a matter of having the right policies. They denounce the bureaucratization of American society—they regard it as contrary to the right kind of relationship among human beings—but they accept it as the means of achieving their own high ideals. As the activity of government has grown in scale and intensity, each successive step forward has quickly been accepted. It is accepted not just because it has been enacted in legislation by a constitutionally legitimate procedure and by a constitutionally legitimate body of legislators; it is accepted as an instrument of right policies seeking right ends.

Intellectuals seem to have no doubt that, given those ends of policy, the machinery of government is capable of achieving them. Although they are severely dissatisfied with contemporary American society, down to its very foundations, only a tiny minority despair of its irredeemability. Redemption must come through governmental action.

There are socialists—or, at any rate, persons who call themselves socialists—among American intellectuals: those who, out of piety toward their own past or out of positive conviction, call themselves socialists are but a very small percentage of the many discontented American intellectuals. These American socialist intellectuals think that for the foreseeable future socialism is only a possibility for other countries. As far as the United States is concerned, the advent of socialism is to them something like the coming of the Messiah—very desirable, and even, in the infinitely long run, certain, but no one knows when. Meanwhile, although they distrust the existing bourgeois state because it is not quite in the right hands, they expect it to do what socialism would do much better.

Most of the dissatisfied intellectuals in the United States are not socialists, whatever may be the hidden and suppressed yearnings deep within their hearts. Many of them, however, believe that only governmental control over resources, governmental allocation, prescription, prohibition, and provision can solve irrevocably the problems which face mankind, and can thereby realize the ideals of justice, equality, freedom, material well-being, and dignity. They believe this despite their dislike of most American politicians and their abomination of bureaucracy. Therein lies the paradox in the contemporary situation.

But there is also a paradox stretched out over time. Fifty years ago the discontented intellectuals who preempted attention in the ensuing

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decades, and whose views have now triumphed over a broad front, did not think that such things as are now expected could be asked of the American government. H. L. Mencken, Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Edmund Wilson, John Dos Passos, Sinclair Lewis, and other intellectuals of the 1920s never pressed the American government to take control of American society and to reshape it closer to their heart's desire. Rather, they thought poorly of American government and expected nothing worthwhile from it, any more than an inveterate drunkard could be expected to lead a successful campaign for prohibition.

Yet there is a line which binds the present to the past: these newer attitudes are only new in a certain sense. They have grown out of intellectual traditions which contained them implicitly and which could come into their present form through fusion with traditions that at first seemed alien to them. This was possible only through an expansion of discontent and its traditions into parts of the intellectual class which a half-century ago had little connection or sympathy with their discontented contemporaries.

I

In the 1920s, national politics and affairs of state did not dominate the attention of most Americans in the way they have come to do in more recent decades. American intellectuals did not follow, as they do now, the movement of public affairs. There were a few eminent intellectuals, like Walter Lippmann in journalism; a few persons with intellectual sympathies and connections, like Gifford Pinchot, Ernest Gruening, and Wilbur Cross in politics and administration; a few, like Henry Pringle and Charles Merriam, astride politics and intellectual activity; and some, like the Survey Associates, who concerned themselves with social or labor legislation. There were, of course, the professors of the social sciences at the University of Wisconsin. Scattered here and there across the country were economists concerned with tariffs, "dumping," taxation, wages and working conditions, family budgets, and trade unions and labor legislation who hoped that these writings would influence opinion and policy. There were professors of international law in touch with the State Department or interested in the League of Nations; the Council on Foreign Relations and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace expressed their moderate views and their affirmation of the existing institutional powers. There were sociologists who were associated with local crime commissions, juvenile delinquency, juvenile protection associations, "Americanization" studies, broken families. All these social scientists were concerned with the improvement of American

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society; but their expectations were only moderate, and they expected more from voluntary and private action than from the federal government. They were intellectuals but not discontented.

But, by and large, American intellectuals—both the discontented and the more affirmative—did not attempt to have a formative influence upon, or even to attend very closely to, the course of governmental action. One reason was that they did not expect much of government, other than that it would perform corrupt and otherwise immoral service for the rich, and would further the personal advantage of those who succeeded in rising in its ranks. Even to those whose attitudes were not so scathing, the thought did not occur that government was the institution to do the job. The discontented American intellectuals averted their minds from the governments of the United States—apart from socialist municipal governments in Milwaukee, Schenectady, and Bridgeport or certain progressive state governments in the Northwest—except to mock them or abuse them in ribald or regretful tones. Those who did not take so strongly negative a view wanted government to be more efficient and more honest, but not the source of every benefit and the means of every improvement.

In a few large cities, a life of letters existed in which circles of book reviewers and editorial writers surveyed the passing scene with mild disdain. They were sardonic; they thought being amused by the foibles of their rulers and fellow-countrymen was the only possible attitude in a world which could not be controlled and which was, for that matter, not all that bad. (F. P. Adams, Heywood Broun, Charles Merz, Frederick Lewis Allen essentially adapted the urbane tone of a masculine club. This was the atmosphere from which *The New Yorker* emerged; Eustace Tilley viewed the world with mild disdain through his monocle.)

The *New Republic* continued its traditional interest, but mostly in the way of a doleful commentary from the sidelines rather than from within the center where events are affected. It derived from a tradition which had once borne hopes of having an improving influence in the direction of a slightly more regulatory government, but it seemed to have little hope that its mild desires would be realized. The *Nation* was little different. Both weeklies still kept their eyes hopelessly on the machine from which little good came. They were concerned, but felt themselves to be excluded. They saw themselves as cast into the position of outsiders, and they did not like it.

The literary sections of these journals took up a different attitude: the contributors appeared to be less interested in politics and government. They, too, were discontented with what they saw, especially with the

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influence of American society on American culture, and they asserted their views in censorious tones. They found American society coarse and boorish, callow and narrowly philistine as portrayed in the *Saturday Evening Post* and the Hearst press; naïvely optimistic in Ralph Waldo Trine, or weakly genteel in the *Saturday Review of Literature,* the *Bookman,* the Browning Society, and in the essays of Agnes Repplier and Henry Van Dyke. The reviewers in the *New Republic* and the *Nation* were linked with a wider, more bohemian, more angrily contemptuous circle reaching out to expatriation. They saw an American society where intellect seemed to have no place, where scientists were barely tolerated or appreciated only for their contribution to material progress, and where literary men and artists had nowhere to lay their heads. In their view, American society was a miscarriage of an ideal, if not a farce.

In these literary circles, a glorified image of European societies prevailed. In Europe, intellectuals counted; they could participate in politics with educated politicians, or in socialist movements in which university teachers and theorists could find a place. In Europe, literary men were respected. Victor Hugo's funeral had a place in the collective memory of American literary men. (They were like the two beggars who, at the sight of the somber and luxurious catafalque in the funeral cortège of a member of the Rothschild family, allegedly said: "*Diese Leute leben!*") Cafés, clubs, newspapers with feuilletons, societies in which the very air was suffused with intellectual culture—all were lacking in the United States.

Serious culture in America was, in this view, starved by an uncomprehendingly naïve, bustling busyness concerned with the trivia of getting and spending on the one side, and suffocated by the stale air of gentility on the other. Much as the discontented intellectuals disliked the gentility of the established "official" culture, they inherited its aversion for the "boorishness" of the philistines. They hated the grossly boastful celebration of American accomplishments and of American superiority to ruined and decayed Europe—to which was joined a puritanism which disapproved and persecuted new truths and new modes of life. Their response was a passionate dislike of it all, sometimes expressed in desperately painful revulsion, sometimes in angry or contemptuous denunciation.

There were also other literary intellectuals, like Willa Cather and Zona Gale, who did not take it quite so hard, who did not denounce the society of their fellow countrymen so vehemently. They, too, however, though they expressed it in more measured tones, found the life of the literary and artistic intellectual rather difficult. They were sad that the

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American taste for intellectual works was not sufficiently discriminating. Although they found their country interesting and stimulating, and felt a quiet affection for it, they, too, felt isolated within it. As Zona Gale noted, it was not easy for an artist in a "land so lacking in the scrutiny, the pattern or the label of the past. . . ." But neither the indiscriminateness of American critics and of the larger public, nor the newness of American society, disaffected them in a decisive way.

In addition, there were many intellectuals who stuck to their last and did not seek a wide audience possessing a general literary culture. They quietly did their scholarly and scientific work, publishing their results in scholarly and scientific journals and taking little publicly expressed interest in the wider world. If they did not like American society, they kept quiet about it. Its cultural poverty and political vices did not bother them. Some political scientists, continuing the tradition of the professorial *Geheimrat* brought by H. B. Adams to Johns Hopkins and by W. A. Dunning to Columbia, maintained contacts with the federal government, offering advice on international law, trade, and diplomacy, or discussed tariffs and the European war debts with officials who would listen to them. They obviously did not find American politics, government, and society as morally reprehensible as did those who regarded themselves as intellectuals.

Those who discussed or touched on public matters in novels, essays, poems, books, and occasional articles in "intellectual" journals like the two above-mentioned liberal weeklies, the *Dial, Hound and Horn,* the *Masses,* or the *American Mercury,* almost invariably expressed attitudes which in one way or another were hostile to the powers which dominated American society. They were against the traditions which lived on in public opinion, in politics and government, in private business, in the churches, and in the voluntary associations which spoke the language of the prevailing ethos and attempted to impose it throughout society. Sometimes they withdrew to a more refined privacy, or went abroad to live and "to write," an act which asserted the impossibility of "being creative" in the United States.

These critical attitudes of intellectuals toward their government and society were embedded in their time and place. It was not society or public opinion in general which discontented American men of letters saw as inimical to spiritual things; it was American society and American public opinion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. European society, with all its injustices, was almost always lauded for its congeniality to things of the spirit. The excommunication of Spinoza by the Jewish community of Amsterdam, the necessity for so

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many of the *philosophes* to publish their work abroad or under false imprints, the prosecutions of Baudelaire, Flaubert, and Zola, and the hounding of Lord Byron were not adduced to alleviate the specifically American fault; these events were sometimes treated as if they had actually occurred in the United States.

The French Academy and the Royal Society showed that governments could be patrons of learning and letters, although sometimes the French Academy was cited as evidence of the dullness and stuffiness of academic intellectual life—the real target here, of course, being American academics. The German government showed that a national administration could be virtuous and efficient. The administrative class of the British civil service showed that governments could provide an honorable place for those who studied classics rather than "practical" subjects. It was the American government and American politics which were at fault, having strayed onto the path of protecting the property of the wealthy and the self-enrichment of politicians.

Capitalists as such were perhaps an exception to the proposition that things were worse in the United States—they were a bad lot everywhere, since they were in pursuit of money. But the American capitalists and their greed were not held in check by other powers in society because they had in fact succeeded in bringing government, culture, and society under their dominion. They received no good marks from the discontented intellectuals for their philanthropic and collecting activities. Literary men and artists did not benefit from the patronage of the philanthropic foundations or the wealthy individuals. Only academics, scientists, and long-dead artists were their beneficiaries. Otto Kahn was so exceptional that his existence made for greater emphasis on the lack of interest among the wealthy in living writers and artists.

The discontented intellectuals proceeded from two postulates in their assessment of their country. One was that the spirit in America had had the misfortune to alight at the periphery of civilization, so that America's institutions and its ethos had not been able to acquire the form which they had developed in the center of European life and which made the great cultural efflorescences possible there. The other postulate was that a morally good society—one congenial to the spirit—could be created and fostered through a government which pursued the right policies of regulation, control, allocation, and provision. I wish to lay special emphasis on this postulate because it lay so far below the level of explicit assertion in the years before the decade of the depression.

A socialistic society was the intellectuals' ideal, since in such a society

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by definition there would be no private greed and, consequently, the public scene would not be disfigured by the coarseness or insensitivity which accompanied greed. Poverty would cease to exist because it, too, was a function of greed. Justice would be installed because it would no longer be distorted by greed or private interest. Such a society would naturally be congenial to intellectual and artistic creativity, since greed and poverty were inimical to sensitivity and imagination. Puritanism went hand in hand with greed. Socialism would certainly not be puritanical; it was conducive to the freedom of the spirit and the body.

Only occasionally were these two postulates explicitly expressed, and some intellectuals disavowed them, in their explicit form. The municipal reformers, for example, saw honest and efficient government as a good in itself, and as an end worthy of engaging their energy and devotion. They did not seek an extension of governmental activity, only its improvement; they did not think of its cultural consequences. Still, the traditions which inspired municipal reform and civil service reform had a collectivistic overtone. Both drew inspiration from the *Verein für Sozialpolitik,* which was the organ of the *Kathedersozialisten.* In the United States, populism and regulatory collectivism, institutional reform, muckraking, and the discontented intellectuals' criticism of American politics and government and American culture came together. Even at the end of the last century, there was some sense of affinity among those who swam with these various currents. Only much later did they come together in their present constellation.

Not many American intellectuals were doctrinaire socialists. Marxism was very feeble among American intellectuals before the depression of the 1930s. The Socialist party was never very large. It had a loyal following in some cities—New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Cleveland among them—but mainly among central and eastern European immigrants. In a number of universities and colleges, it had a fellow-traveling League for Industrial Democracy to which some students and teachers belonged. But far beyond the boundaries of socialist parties, a vague conviction was widely held that something like socialism was the answer to America's problems.

Governmental action was therefore acceptable both as a means to the higher ends of a better society and a more serious culture, and also as a means for the improvement of these means. The cure for the imperfections of American politics and government was more governmental action, under popular control. Once cured, the forward path of government action would lie open.

There was a particularly populistic theme in American statism.

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American populism aimed at the improvement of government by making it, as it is now called, "responsive" to the desires and interest of the populace. Reformers were optimistic about the restoration of sovereignty to the people once the grip of the "political machines" and of the "machine politicians" was broken. There was less optimism in the 1920s about the specific institutional devices by which this grip could be broken—namely, by recall, the initiative, and the referendum. But the populistic image still remained. (It was reactivated in a new form in the "popular front" of the 1930s.)

Not only was much compassion expressed for the harsh lives of the poor—this was common in the naturalistic novel—but also an admiration for their tough, sturdy character which withstood adversity both in the countryside and in the great cities. They were hard workers; they were "close to real life." They were the victims of existence in a strenuous society. Willa Cather's early novels and those of Theodore Dreiser and Sherwood Anderson in various ways expressed deep moral appreciation of the poor. Edgar Lee Masters's *Spoon River Anthology* and W. I. Thomas's *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, as well as Charles Cooley's sociological reflections—each in its own way appreciated the "common man." Even H. L. Mencken's contempt for "yokels," his baiting of the "booboisie," was balanced by his benign image of the workingman and the workingman's own particular university: the old-fashioned beer saloon, with its polished wood and brasswork, its shining mirrors and brilliant lights.

This populistic view was not universally shared. H. L. Mencken was far from a populist; he admired Germany, imperial Germany, of which he was a partisan. He believed that America needed an aristocracy to keep the "herd" at bay and create a setting in which a superior culture could flourish. Ezra Pound was no populist either; he believed in an aristocracy of the spirit. Or so he said in his scolding letter to Harriet Monroe when he took exception to the epigraph from Walt Whitman on the cover of *Poetry:* "To have great poets, there must be great audiences, too." Ezra Pound wrote: ". . . the Lord of the universe sends into this world in each generation a few intelligent spirits, and these ultimately manage the rest. But this rest—this rabble, this multitude—does *not* create the great artist. They are drifting on aimless without him."

There were other critics of American politics, society, and culture who were neither socialistic nor populistic. The "humanists," who were slowly gathering force since the beginning of the century—dating from Irving Babbitt's *Literature and the American College*—were not at all populistic; they were against democracy as well as against the

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dominance of the businessman. In the 1920s, they began to become more prominent. Overlapping them were the defenders of the culture of the old South, in contradistinction to the urban, industrial, democratic, populistic—and vulgar—culture of the North ever since the Civil War. But these intellectuals, critical though they were of nearly all aspects of the contemporary United States, were not on the main line.

James Branch Cabell was taken seriously by some discontented intellectuals. "Art for art's sake" was accepted as part of the critical complex which was opposed to gentility, moralism, and the pursuit of wealth. *Jurgen,* a book now justly forgotten, won a place in the hearts of the discontented intellectuals because it was opposed to puritanism and was harassed by the censorial agents of the puritanical ethos.

The various movements toward the reform of government at the end of the last century—populism and the new progressivism—had gained the approval of many critical men of letters and artists who were against American society on moral and aesthetic grounds. Among them were, of course, those who thought that these reforms would be doomed to be unavailing unless they aimed and arrived at a socialistic order of society. They thought that only a socialist government could create a civilized society and a culture which could raise America out of the inferiority of its peripheral or provincial condition and of which American intellectuals need not be ashamed. Literary naturalism, aestheticism, bohemianism, civil service reform movements, muckraking journalism exposing the "trusts" and the magnates of the public utilities, and democratic socialism, merged to give form to the tradition from which grew the belief in the rightfulness of the regulatory, then the welfare, and then the omnicompetent state.

II

The Russian revolutions of 1917—February and October—called forth an enthusiastic response among many American intellectuals. It had already been adumbrated by admiration for the great and lesser Russian writers who were becoming known in the United States—in part through the writings of William Lyon Phelps, whom Mencken abused as one of the large and sterile class of academic "schoolmarms." The Russian Revolution appeared to be an intellectual revolution inspired by a nearly century-old literary tradition running from Pushkin and Lermontov through Gogol, and particularly through Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Turgenev, and coming to a culmination in Gorky, Andreyev, and Chekhov. The Russian writers were associated with a movement of emancipation from autocracy; they were regarded as "fore-

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runners." It was historically appropriate that Trotsky should occupy a high position as a master of the pen who brought the prophecy to fulfillment by the mastery of armed force.

The Russian Revolution was regarded as a popular revolution, an expression of the desires and interests of the people. Moreover, it was a socialist revolution; it would give power to a transfigured government which would create a "new society" without the blemishes of the old. Sympathy with the Russian Revolution was widespread among both academic and literary intellectuals, who had nothing to do with the infant Communist party or even with the Socialist party and who had no interest in, or knowledge of, the writings of Marx and Engels or the Marxist books brought out by the C. H. Kerr Publishing Company.

Sympathy was heightened by the hostile attitude taken toward the Russian Revolution by the American government and the American press. The recollection of the recent trials of Art Young and Max Eastman and the group gathered round the *Masses* was reanimated by the harassment of the I.W.W. and other radicals as well as of persons suspected of being radicals. These persecutions and trials further embittered the relations between the already dissident, but certainly not revolutionary, intellectuals and the powers in American government and society; they made intellectuals who had no sympathy with revolution or with communism sensitive to the conflict between the freedom of the spirit and the prevailing order of American life. The "Palmer raids" were placed in the same category as the activities of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the Anti-Saloon League. All were repressive of the freedom of the spirit. All moved those who were dissatisfied with American society and culture, both the bohemians and the more sedate, a little closer to politics.

The early years of the Russian Revolution made the Soviet Union appear to be an intellectuals' utopia, where freedom of expression, artistic "experimentation," and socialism were instituted and guided by intellectuals, and supported and participated in by a virtuous populace. The revolution was regarded as an experiment, and experimentation had a good name in the United States, and not only among political intellectuals. Were not the Imagists and other poets experimenting with new forms? Were not James Joyce and J. M. Synge experimenting with new forms? Was not Eugene O'Neill experimenting with new themes and new modes of representing them dramatically? Was not expressionism on the stage an experiment? And did not John Dewey hold out the "experiment" as a model, not only in education but for all of life in all its aspects?

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As a result of this sympathy with the Russian Revolution, the idea of a socialist state as the organ for transforming mankind's estate from drab self-seeking philistinism to a life made significant by devotion to an ideal was established more forcefully than ever before. The Soviet Union acquired a status in the pantheon of many American intellectuals which, despite the clouding of its name by tyranny and mendacity, it has never lost. It still remains, in various ways, a lodestar, even though in its actual condition the Soviet Union today is no longer believed by many intellectuals to be on the road to the fulfillment of the best hopes of humanity.

The trial, conviction, and execution of Sacco and Vanzetti was another important event. Sacco and Vanzetti were radicals. That they were anarchists made no difference at the time; they were perceived as the victims of greedy, self-protecting capitalists, corrupt politicians, and the genteel classes—who, when the time came, could be as hard-faced and cruel as the worst politicians and the most brutal police agents. The case of Sacco and Vanzetti drew the sympathy of many American intellectuals who otherwise had very little interest in politics and had not been in the company of the discontented. It brought them into a circle of ideas with which they had had no connection before. It also made them familiar with the idiom of the Communist party. This familiarity was important in extending and spreading the tradition of the discontented intellectuals; above all, it brought to the surface certain hidden implications of this discontent.

III

Of the American intellectuals of the 1920s, only a small proportion were intellectuals in the sense previously attached to the designation "intelligentsia" which was beginning to become current in the United States—namely, the artists, literary men, scientists, and others who were discontented with the traditions and institutions of their own country and its moral culture. Far from the majority of all those engaged in doing scientific and scholarly research, or teaching in universities and colleges, or writing editorials for major newspapers, or broadcasting, or writing serious novels, essays, and poems, or practicing the learned professions looked upon politics, government, and society in the United States in this way. Most accepted the central institutional system of American society; they thought within the categories and applied the criteria of its central value system. The existence of these other intellectuals—far more numerous, far better placed, and generally indifferent to the concerns of the discontented intellectuals—accentuated the discontented intellectuals' sense of isolation from American life;

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their sense of affinity with the prevailing order of life deprived the discontented intellectuals of the sympathetic audience they desired. Had such an audience existed, the discontented intellectuals might have been less inclined to emphasize the differences between the way intellectuals were treated in Europe and the way they were treated in the United States.

If the discontented intellectuals were in a marginal position in the larger American intellectual communities in the 1920s and before, and if they had no prominent spokesmen in the center of American society, how did their views become so dominant in American society over the next four decades? The Great Depression of 1929 had much to do with this.

The depression had a shattering effect on the traditional ethos of American puritanism. For one thing, the failures of banks and foreclosure of mortgages delivered a shattering blow to one of its fundamental tenets: the obligation to discipline one's spending, to save for the future, and to protect oneself against the dangers of the rainy day. Unemployment disordered the pattern of marriage; it weakened the superior position of the husband and father and strengthened the position of the wife and mother. Young persons' difficulty in finding their first jobs frustrated and discredited ambition, and discouraged them from anticipating a steady rise to success through a career of lifelong perseverance. The depression showed the arrogant businessman to be a failure in the one thing he cared about—acquiring more and more wealth.

Among those who had reached maturity, and did not themselves feel its ravages directly in unemployment and poverty, the depression had similar effects. They were made more aware than ever before of the misery of the poor and the unemployed. These persons had not been cruel or inhumane; simply, in sticking to their respective tasks, they had not attended to what went on in the "lower depths." Now that the depression had exposed these depths, the very values which had led them to appreciate American society now made them ready to be more critical of it. Engineers—though not a large proportion of them— began to examine ideas about the organization and management of all of society as if it were a project for the construction of a large building or a dam. Scientists—again, not many but enough to come forward at scientific societies—began to canvass the attractive possibility of conducting the affairs of government more scientifically through the application of scientific knowledge and the more active participation of scientists, sociologists, and political scientists; they found it relatively easy to take a

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critical attitude toward the deficiencies of American society and then urge their cure through governmental intervention. Social scientists had already been dealing with the imperfections of American society when they studied urbanization, immigration, municipal government, family disorganization, race relations, and the rest of the long list of what had always been thought of as "social problems." Very few of them at that time went as far as Marxism, but the active welfare policies of the Roosevelt administration—scanty though they were by present standards—immediately recommended themselves. More important, they came to believe in the rightness of governmental intervention and in the capacity of government to intervene effectively. Many economists also made the transition quite easily, especially after the federal government's adoption of Keynesian policies.

The intellectuals' awareness of this considerable new audience—together with the discomfiture of the existing order, its spokesmen and its custodians—was a fillip to the morale of those who had hitherto felt themselves in danger of being overpowered by an unsympathetic American society. The weaknesses of both American government and American society, revealed by the depression, vindicated their disparagement by the discontented intellectuals. The uncongenial ethos of American society was shown to be wanting, and its imperfections were being admitted by persons who had previously not acknowledged them.

America began to become more interesting to those intellectuals who had previously felt ill at ease in it. It began to be a little more like Europe—with demonstrations, violent conflicts, and publicity in the daily press for declarations by intellectuals about the great events of the times. The United States was ceasing to be a province; it was becoming part of the great world. Of course it was still fundamentally unsatisfactory. Many of the older beliefs about the loneliness of artists and writers in America persisted, even among those artists and writers who were overcoming that loneliness by associating with various political "movements" and sects. The old bohemianism was ripening into socialistic radicalism while still retaining many of its old articles of faith.

In this transition, the Russian revolutions of 1917 showed the way. In contrast with the image of a faltering American society, and the actual experience of widespread unemployment and the loss of savings, investments, and property, the Soviet Union was being put forward as a society which had no unemployment and in which all citizens were secure against adversity. Many persons who were certainly not communists were greatly impressed by the accounts of Soviet accomplish-

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ments and the benefits which flowed from them. Unemployment had, of course, been made impossible by economic planning; injustice had been eliminated. An eminent specialist in mental health was convinced that there was no mental illness in the Soviet Union. All these excellent things were made possible by "planning." Those sympathizers who had not become members of the Communist party, or who had ceased to be sympathizers with it, acknowledged that civil liberties had been suspended in the Soviet Union. But this was explained as a temporarily necessary measure—or at least as one which was understandable in view of the threats of foreign espionage and sabotage by foreign powers and of the danger of military "intervention" by the capitalistic states of Western Europe and America which had intervened once before to undo the revolution.

The phenomenon of "fellow-traveling" was not confined to contributors to the *New Masses* or to persons who had become associated with the John Reed clubs or the American League Against War and Fascism. The lines which separated "fellow-traveling," sympathy with socialism (of the sort represented by Norman Thomas), and support for the New Deal—all quite different phenomena—were not clearly defined; the boundaries between them were certainly not impermeable. All had in common the belief that only strong governmental action—"planning"—could do what was needed. There was not always agreement on what precisely was needed, but whatever it was, governmental action was indispensable.

The complaints of the discontented intellectuals of the 1920s and 1930s were changing. The United States was less frequently charged with being a country where intellectuals could not find a place to lay their heads. The "exiles" returned, sometimes from abroad, sometimes from within the country. Once back in America, Malcolm Cowley helped to spread the newly learned gospel; Edmund Wilson became "political"; even Theodore Dreiser, who had been a victim of philistine repressiveness but who had nonetheless thought that fundamentally the United States was no worse for an artist than any other country, became a fellow-traveler and then a communist. Sinclair Lewis, too, joined in the march, at least part of the way, by showing Babbittry becoming fascistic. Lincoln Steffens, having seen that the "future" was working in the Soviet Union, became a leading fellow-traveler. The Spanish Civil War helped too. It became an intellectuals' concern, and Ernest Hemingway conferred his blessing on the power of the socialist state. Deep-dyed bohemians like Maxwell Bodenheim also supported the "socialist way." H. L. Mencken, who would not accept the redemptive power of the

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government, at least in the United States, lost his following and turned to autobiography and philology.

Some of the discontented intellectuals fell off the "locomotive of history" and became dissenters from the main line of fellow-travelers: among them Louis Fischer, Eugene Lyons, William Henry Chamberlain, John Chamberlain, Max Eastman, and John Dos Passos. But such losses were far more than compensated by the acquisition of many new adherents to the belief that only vigorous and comprehensive action by government could cope with the country's problems.

The rejection of the dominance of the market, which had been one of the main themes of the discontented intellectuals for the first three decades of the century, now found many more supporters. No longer was this the judgment only of those who found American government, society, and culture morally and aesthetically repulsive. The populistic belief that what was wrong in the machinations of "big business" could be cured by governmental regulation was adopted and extended. The political and aesthetic admiration for the Russian Revolution and its patent accomplishments in eliminating mental disorder, unemployment, and all the other troubles of human existence, made planning—scientific and rational planning—the obvious way of proceeding.

With the businessman discredited and party politicians no more liked than they had ever been, the military never thought of as a candidate for the task of improving society, the executive branch of the federal government became, for lack of an alternative, the chosen instrument of social reclamation. Franklin Roosevelt conferred charismatic qualities on the executive branch, but they did not seep very far down. The accumulation of power in the hands of the president and his immediate circle, which has since become a commonplace, was a novelty in the first years of his administration. His "brain trust" of academic social scientists and his link with the famous university law schools of the eastern seaboard helped to legitimate his policies among intellectuals; but the legitimacy did not spread to the government itself. In Great Britain, Germany, and France the higher civil service drew highly educated young men from the best academic institutions, but this never happened in the United States. Great numbers of university graduates entered the federal service in the 1930s, going into the new agencies and the expanded older departments—but they went unwillingly because that was the only employment available. Nor did the entry of university graduates into the service of the federal government enhance the prestige of the civil service, as reformers had hoped. Despite persistent efforts to free it from the ill-repute which was its lot for many decades, the federal

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civil service has not come to be regarded by the educated classes in the United States as offering one of the more dignified professional careers. One still does not aspire to a career in the civil service of the United States; one falls into it. The Foreign Service is not infrequently viewed as a "career" by a young person at university, but it is much rarer to find one who thinks of going into the civil service. One explanation for this might be that those who enter the civil service early do not rise to the heights. The heights are entered later from other heights, and not from below. The immense aggregated power exercised by the civil service is made up of innumerable fragments of power, and exercising power fragmentarily does not hold much appeal.

Many other factors seem to be involved in this distaste for the dryness of governmental service and for its incapacity to enchant. Whatever the causes, the paradox remains; the leviathan which is the object of repugnance at worst, and of indifference at best, is nonetheless put forward as the instrument for the attainment of the highest ideals.

IV

The Second World War demonstrated the immense capacities of government. To assemble millions of soldiers, to feed them and to equip them and to produce in great quantities the military matériel and the means of delivering it and them to far corners of the earth, were very great achievements. No previous American government—probably no government anywhere—had ever undertaken such tremendous tasks and carried them through to the point of victory. The Second World War showed that very great power could be successfully exercised by government.

The accomplishments of the government seemed to justify the aspirations of socialists and interventionists—it justified the optimists of planning and the critics of the market as an arrangement for doing some of the important work of society. It showed, too, that science could be successfully organized by government, and not simply routine science either. It showed that all sorts of intellectuals could perform their tasks under the auspices of government—poets, historians, anthropologists, and others.

The decade after the war was remarkable for the evaporation of radicalism: partly as a result of persecution by legislative committees, partly as a result of disillusionment about the moral quality of the Soviet Union and the Communist party in the United States, but also because the power of America—more specifically, the power of the federal government—was so great that, by virtue of that massive and simple fact,

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the country ceased to be provincial. The resentment of the discontented American intellectuals against the provinciality of their society diminished as the United States became the dominant center of the earth.

Now at the center of American life, intellectuals of the sort who had previously suffered from their provinciality no longer felt themselves so cut off and lonely in America. They felt enhanced by the enhancement of American society. The cultural tone of the United States had, moreover, changed. The audience for the culture of the discontented intellectuals and their heirs was no longer so restricted as it had been. The great pictorial magazines, like *Life* and *Look,* and even the *Saturday Evening Post,* with *Esquire* and *Vogue* soon to follow, admitted an ample and relatively highly intellectual element—and they also provided employment. Modern painting became popular and avant-garde painters could now earn a livelihood—some much more than a livelihood—from the sales of their paintings to American collectors. The increasing numbers of young persons in colleges and universities extended the size of the audience for serious books—and the emphasis on contemporaneity in many courses of study in literature and social sciences meant that living writers were studied, or at least recommended for study. Living writers were no longer cold-shouldered by the academic caretakers of the fame of the dead. The distance between the universities and the discontented intellectuals was reduced.

Hostility toward communism was widespread; the belief in socialism was at a very low ebb; very little interest was shown in the writings of Marx and Engels. The Soviet Union, as its brutality became widely known, lost some of its standing as a measure of the goodness of a regime and as a model for emulation. Yet the reconciliation with American society did not go very deep. The vulgarity of "mass culture" was proclaimed to be a blemish; its denunciation replaced the earlier revulsion against philistinism and etiolated idealism. Even then, however, there seemed to be so much else in American society that, except for a handful of Aesopian and disappointed Marxists, many intellectuals saw the vulgarity as good clean fun or as a price which had to be paid for other accomplishments.

In fact, the path which society in the United States seemed to be taking was generally accepted as the right one. Politicians might still be a poor lot. Senator McCarthy and his Sub-Committee on Internal Security and the House of Representatives Committee on Un-American Affairs were evidence of that; and neither Harry Truman nor Dwight Eisenhower aroused any reverence among intellectuals. Still, the capac-

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ity and resourcefulness of government stood out, and the rightfulness of its employment for progressive ends was equally evident. Even before the Second World War, the belief that the government could prevent unemployment and should provide for the aged and the unemployed had put down strong roots in opinion and policy. After the war, these policies became more firmly established and belief in them more widespread. The government now accepted the responsibility for promoting economic growth and for nurturing the development of science to make the technological inventions needed for economic growth as well as for military uses. In doing so, it also became responsible for the promotion of scientific teaching and research in universities. University teachers and presidents accepted this new role without any equivocation—even though, only one or two decades earlier, they had predicted that acceptance of federal financial support would bring about governmental interference with the autonomy of the universities. Hand in hand with this acceptance of the extension of governmental power, the conviction grew that the progress of economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and systems-analysis made it possible for governments to accomplish things which no governments had ever done before.

The two decades following the war were marked by the dissolution of empires and the emancipation of the colonies. The acquisition of sovereignty by indigenous rulers attracted much sympathetic attention in the United States. There was a great deal of confidence that these new states in Asia and Africa could now advance rapidly into material well-being through vigorous governmental action. Much optimism was expressed about the capacities of well-advised governments to transform their "traditional" societies into "modern" societies. The promotion and "planning of change" became the program laid out for the governments of these countries by their well-wishers abroad, and most of all by well-wishers among academic social scientists, journalists, and government officials in the United States. At a time when publicly expressed enthusiasm for socialism within the United States seemed to be in abeyance, or at least muted, the belief in the power of a scientifically conducted government to "modernize" a society—to transform it in accordance with the ideal of progress—grew stronger. Just as in Europe in the eighteenth century, the notion of the arbitrariness and iniquity of traditional monarchical institutions was sustained by the observation of the "noble savage," so in the twentieth century the belief in the omnicompetence of government was sustained by the belief that the now sovereign heirs of the "noble savage" would show a similar omnicompetence. Of course, lots of "human capital" and, above all, "high-

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level manpower," would be needed, which meant lots of university graduates. This was a very gratifying thought to the greatly enlarged academic profession in the United States.

V

The decade of the 1960s saw many additional tasks placed on the agenda of American society, or, more particularly, its government. The rediscovery of poverty reanimated the critical attitude toward American society which had largely been in suspension for the two preceding decades. So did the simultaneous appearance of the urgent demand for improvement of the civil and economic condition of Negroes and of the appalling condition of cities. The assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy, on the other hand, demonstrated the frailty of authority, and these general dissatisfactions were heightened by the conduct of the war in Southeast Asia and student agitations in the universities. The federal government was vehemently denounced. Its ineptitude in dealing with the disorder in the large cities, its military inefficacy in Southeast Asia, and the supineness of the authorities in the universities in the face of the defiance of their students—all these made reigning authorities seem weak and hence illegitimate. The discontent of the intellectuals reasserted itself, but now it was no longer the state of mind of an isolated minority of literary men.

The successive presidential administrations from 1963 onward were charged with negligence, malevolence, incompetence; and their legitimacy was strenuously denied. Civil disobedience became admired by this much-increased corps of discontented intellectuals. Discontent had indeed come to be regarded as the only allowable attitude of an intellectual. Many persons who had not previously placed themselves in the category of intellectual now did so, and being an intellectual entailed the obligation of outraged discontent. Anger became a virtue when it was directed against authority. The breaking of the law became legitimate; arguments for the observance of the law were said to be arguments for "law and order," which itself became something that few of the more vocal intellectuals would abide. To them the view that law and order was a precondition of civil society was the same as being in favor of forcing five-year-old children to work in coal mines and cotton factories.

This repugnance toward government and the readiness to deny its legitimacy were aggravated by the incumbency of a Republican president who had been for several decades deeply hated by progressive—which now meant angrily discontented—intellectuals. The denial

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of legitimacy was further supported by the disclosure of corruption and overreaching of authority in the government itself.

First the vice-president and then the president were forced to resign. The impotence of the president during the last part of his tenure also enfeebled his legitimacy. The succession of a president and vice-president, neither of whom was elected, further weakened belief in the legitimacy of the government. (It should be pointed out, however, that the reelection of Richard Nixon in 1972 by a very large majority did not count for much in the way of enhancing the Republican president's legitimacy among the progressive intellectuals. Nor did the fact that he was forced from office by the persistent investigations by Congress cause them to increase their admiration for the merits of representative institutions.)

All the while, the intellectuals pressed this same government, whether it was Democratic or Republican, to do all that was necessary to abolish any situations which offended their moral sense, and to replace them by enduring arrangements which would satisfy the needs of the people. The paradoxical belief in the bountifulness of an illegitimate government reached its highest form in the demand that the federal government provide support for actions intended to frustrate and subvert its authority. It became a stale commonplace that the universities must be centers of criticism; grants were to be made by government to students, universities, and "citizens' groups," to enable them to denounce and act against it. Illegitimacy and omnipotence were to be combined in actions calling for the government to subsidize its own subversion. The intellectuals—no longer a small and unheeded minority—took it for granted that all that was "needed" could be done by government, that the economic resources and the administrative machinery and capacity were available to carry out every desired undertaking. Whatever was "needed" lay within the powers of government to provide. And the more actively the legitimacy of the government was refused, the more its capacity to do what was insisted on was believed to exist.

VI

The anti-bourgeois attitude of the small minority of discontented intellectuals of fifty years ago has, under the impact of the depression of 1929, the Second World War, the fifteen-year-long "American century" which followed it, and then the disorders of our civil life of the subsequent fifteen years, been transformed into a Promethean collectivism. The traditions of the discontented intellectuals have undergone a process of development and fusion with other traditions. The

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development, however, has not been uniform: some of its elements continue unchanged. The distrust of governmental authority and of the hatred of private business enterprise persist. As long as collectivism was only implicitly contained within the anti-bourgeois attitude of our discontented intellectuals, no antinomy was visible. Now it has exfoliated and the antinomy has become visible.

The antipolitical and apolitical attitudes of both the discontented and the more or less contented intellectuals of a half-century ago have faded. The intellectual class of the United States has become political again, but in a different way than it ever was before. In the first decades of the American republic, the political attitude of the intellectual class showed much civility. The new political attitude is at its heart uncivil.

This growth in the intensity of political interest without a corresponding growth in civility seems to run at cross-purposes with the program of universal and pervasive governmental action. Exacerbated and acrimonious demands in the face of a government which is refused legitimacy seem to be running on a collision course. A very powerful government, with a huge administrative machine and great discretionary power, is the necessary instrument for any effort to satisfy these comprehensive demands. That effort will not succeed, partly because the ends are unrealizable and partly because the capacities of governments, even where they are very rich and legitimate, are limited by scarcity, talent, human obduracy, and even antinomianism.

These grandiose aspirations, their frustration, and their continued reassertion have put a very heavy strain on our frail civility. Rancorous partisanship and ideological arrogance are inseparable from the belief in the limitless powers of a government without moral virtues of its own and responsive only to an incessant and intense political agitation. Because all is to be governmentalized, everything must be politicized. It is only in this way that the paradox can be resolved.

VII

In 1919, when the movement of ideas which has culminated in our present paradox had begun to make its presence felt, the sagacious Morris Raphael Cohen wrote:

> . . . I wish to suggest . . . some modicum of doubt as to the complacent assumption that only by absorption in some contemporary social problem can the philosopher justify his existence. The great philosophers, like the great artists, scientists, and religious teachers, have all, in large measure, ignored their contemporary social problems.

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His remarks fell then on deaf ears. The ears are even deafer now, when there is so much din. It was about this din and this deafness that Julien Benda published shortly thereafter a book translated into English under the title *The Treason of the Intellectuals*.

Yet the restoration of a precariously saving civility will not happen unless there is some attenuation of the belief that all things are possible and that all demands can be met by a government which is at the disposal of the clamorous spokesmen of the populace. Some withdrawal from this belief in the redemptive power of governmental action is necessary. Some renunciation of the belief that politics is everything and that politicians are nothing is necessary. It would be good if there were some reentry of serious intellectuals into the autonomy and privacy of the intellectual sphere. Such a reentry might make for a larger and more realistic perspective and for more civility. This is not a plea for total withdrawal from the sphere of civil conduct; it is a plea for its rehabilitation. It is not a plea for disregarding the necessary improvement of society. It is a plea for the protection of intellectual activity from doctrinaire politics; it is plea for the protection of politics from doctrinaire intellectuals.

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Poems

Translated by GRAEME WILSON

Tao

Do not ask me who I am.
Names are names are names.
I have learnt from Lao Tzu.
Lao Tzu proclaims
That the world is chaos,
That the real is sham.

I, that am here, am not here.
I, that am not, am.

SIN HUM (1566–1628)

Heredity

When my father died
I found him in the grown
Face of my brother. Brother died,
And then I was alone.

I went down to the valley
And in still water saw
First my father's face, and then
The face my brother wore.

ANONYMOUS

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Moonfisher

Night on the autumn river:
I trail my hook and line
In quiet pools too cold to hold
More than the moon's design.

Happy to have no catch to show
For all these hours afloat,
Home with my haul of moonbeams
I row this empty boat.

PRINCE WOLSAN (1452–1483)

GRAEME WILSON, a member of the British diplomatic service in the Far East, has recently completed translations (with Ito Aiko) of Natsume Soseki's prose, *I Am a Cat* and *Ten Nights of Dream,* and (with Atsumi Ikuko) translations of modern Japanese poetry, *Three Contemporary Japanese Poets*.

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Integration, Segregation, Pluralism

DIANE RAVITCH

IN 1954, WHEN THE SUPREME COURT banned state-imposed school segregation, almost two dozen states had laws that regulated citizens on the basis of their race. There were laws to prevent interracial marriage, laws requiring racially separate schools, and laws to limit access to public facilities. In most southern states, wherever interracial contact might occur, there was a law to prevent or regulate it. This legal superstructure was purposeful, not haphazard. It reinforced a caste system with a code of behavior based on white supremacy. The code's primary intent was to contain and control black people. Deviant whites could sample black life at no risk other than ostracism from their own kind; blacks who stepped outside the bounds ran afoul of the law, the police, and the courts.

The unwritten rules of caste required black deference. Law or no law, a black entered a white person's home through the back door. Law or no law, black people in the deep South stepped off the sidewalk onto the street when passing a white person. In department stores, blacks could sweep the floor but not sell merchandise; in beauty shops, they could shampoo white women's hair, but not set it in curlers. If a black murdered another black in a Saturday night brawl, the police might look the other way; a black who murdered or assaulted a white sometimes did not survive the back room of the police station.

The *Brown* v. *Board of Education* decision, more than any other single event, destroyed the foundation of this monstrous system. Not only did it set in motion the civil rights movement, which educated blacks about their rights and political power, but it began the process of dismantling institutional segregation. After *Brown,* the Constitution, the law, and the courts could no longer be used to prop up the caste system. However haltingly and grudgingly this elementary principle has been accepted in formerly segregated states, there is no longer any doubt that the power of the state may not be employed to discriminate against people on the basis of their color.

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While it is fashionable in some quarters to scoff at the *Brown* decision and to say that it changed very little, anyone who knew the South before 1954 realizes that *Brown* launched a social revolution. Twenty years ago, few blacks voted and those who did were offered a choice among white racist candidates. Today, blacks vote and wield political power; this fact has transformed the nature of southern politics and permitted the victory of moderate and liberal candidates. It is no longer remarkable in the South to see blacks and whites patronizing the same restaurants, the same cinemas, the same shops. Deference is dead, and little is left of the caste system other than the nostalgia of unreconstructed white racists.

Still, there is concern today that a resegregation phenomenon is under way, not only in the South, but in almost every major American metropolitan area; that we are moving inexorably toward de facto apartheid, as the nation's central cities become blacker and the white suburbs grow larger. During the past two decades, vast numbers of southern blacks have moved to the cities and whites have moved out. All of America's largest cities have substantial black minorities. Some, like Atlanta, Washington, D. C., Newark, Gary, and Detroit, have black majorities. Others, like Baltimore, St. Louis, Cleveland, New Orleans, Memphis, and Birmingham, are close to 50 percent black. The suburbs that ring these cities are generally more than 90 percent white. As a result of white flight, sixteen of our twenty largest cities now have a minority of whites in their public schools.

Why are whites leaving the cities? Benjamin Mays, the black president of the Atlanta School Board, believes that "white people are unwilling to live in the same communities with Blacks. They are afraid to raise their children in close proximity to Blacks and to have them attend school with Blacks." Yet although racism is one reason for white flight, it is not the only reason. Suburbanization started long before blacks arrived in the cities in great numbers and occurs in cities where there are relatively few blacks. Some whites move to the suburbs because it represents a step up in personal status; some prefer clean air, safe streets, and small-town life. These same motives no doubt account for the suburban exodus of middle-class blacks as well.

Alongside the familiar black city-white suburb dichotomy, other facts must also be considered. For one thing, four million blacks (17 percent of the black population) now live in the suburbs, an increase of 19.5 percent in the past five years alone. The suburbs *are* permeable. Second, the black migration from the South to the urban North has not only stopped, but has reversed itself; according to the Census Bureau, blacks have been leaving the North and moving into the West and South.

These are the demographic facts, but how they are interpreted de-

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pends on the perspective of the interpreter. The integrationist sees the black concentration in the cities as the onset of a new and insidious form of racial segregation. The cultural pluralist sees the great black urban migration in the same light as previous migrations, and recalls the dire predictions that accompanied the arrival of the Irish, the Jews, and the Italians.

Integration and pluralism are both versions of assimilation, and it is worth noting that in a scant quarter-century the central issue of race has shifted from whether to segregate to whether and how to assimilate. In the early 1950s, the combined power of law and tradition limited black assimilation to those few light-skinned Negroes who "passed" surreptitiously into the white majority. This notion of passing was rather like escaping from blackness, and it fitted in appropriately with the racist belief that blackness was a curse, not a culture.

Intimations of this disparagement of black culture come through in considering both pluralism and integration. Cultural pluralism has been discussed for most of this century, but usually in relation to white ethnic and religious groups that had a distinct cultural heritage and wanted to preserve it; the unwritten assumption seemed to be either that blacks did not have a culture worth preserving or that blacks themselves wanted to flee their racial identity. Similarly, the rhetoric of integration seemed to assume that blacks wanted to merge into the white majority and lose their racial identity. It has been said, for example, that the racial problems of America will lessen as racial intermarriages increase, which is an unsubtle way of suggesting that blacks should lose their blackness and be absorbed by the white majority.

In this country of diverse groups, problems of assimilation underlie many social and political controversies. How should society balance the needs of the common culture against the needs of particular groups? What does American nationality require of Americans? Should the requirements of nationality cancel out other loyalties in pursuit of a homogeneous citizenry? Should government encourage cultural diversity? Should government have a hands-off policy where cultural preferences are involved? Is it good or bad to have neighborhoods and schools that are distinctly Italian or Jewish or black or Oriental? Is it possible to have an American community that is both integrated and pluralistic?

These questions have been agitated for the entire two hundred years of our nationhood, but only in recent years have they fully pertained to the position of blacks. Racial segregation was, in fact, the ultimate form of state-mandated nonassimilation. Segregation set blacks apart and

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made them easier to exploit. Every black who grew up under legalized segregation retains vivid memories of unfair treatment, of neighborhoods with unpaved streets, of schools with broken windows and leaky roofs, of calculated and systematic disadvantage.

Since state-imposed segregation is unconstitutional, the issue today is how and on whose terms blacks should be assimilated into American society. Some Americans believe that any black concentration in schools or neighborhoods suggests segregation and must be eliminated. The heritage of segregation has implanted the prejudice that every all-black school is inferior and every black neighborhood is a slum. There are black nationalists who see any kind of assimilation as a threat to black cultural aspirations, but their numbers are few. And there are cultural pluralists who sense that their perspective has been lost in the polarized verbal duels between integrationists and separatists.

These tensions have historically been played out in educational policy. This has happened for two reasons: first, because of the formative impact that is generally attributed to schooling, as it pertains to one's attitudes, values, skills, and opportunities; and second, because public schools are nearly universal in their reach. The great breach of state segregation came through the public schools, and, just as characteristically, the only consistent public consideration of assimilation policy has been enunciated in Supreme Court desegregation decisions.

It was the Supreme Court that made segregation illegal, and it is the Court that now mediates among the competing demands of integration and pluralism. Proceeding a step at a time, each decision following logically on the previous one, the Court has moved toward an increasingly detailed definition of how blacks are to be assimilated through the public schools. At the time of *Brown,* the Court evidently believed that striking down segregation laws would suffice to bring about desegregation. For a dozen years, lower courts in the South understood the *Brown* decision to mean that the Constitution did not require integration, but merely forbade discrimination.

However, in the decade after 1954, the southern states were so obstinate and devious in their refusal to dismantle dual school systems that the Supreme Court was forced to take a more activist role in bringing about actual desegregation. Freedom-of-choice plans that did not produce measurable desegregation were struck down by the Court in 1968 in the landmark *Green* v. *County School Board* case. New Kent County, Virginia, had two schools, one white and one black, and no residential segregation. Under its freedom-of-choice plan, 15 percent of the blacks attended the formerly white school, but no whites chose to go to the black school. The Supreme Court required the local school board to

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develop a plan that "promises realistically to work now," one that would produce "a system without a 'white' school and a 'Negro' school, but just schools."

It was simple enough in rural New Kent County to decree the elimination of racially identifiable schools. The issue became more complex in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina, another formerly de jure segregated system. Charlotte-Mecklenburg did have residential segregation, and a neighborhood school policy produced racially identifiable schools. But, following the principle in *Green* that the schools had to produce a remedy that "works now," the Court went further in *Swann* v. *Charlotte-Mecklenburg*, directing district judges and school authorities to "make every effort to achieve the greatest possible degree of actual desegregation." This was measured in terms of how many blacks and whites were in the same schools. The requirement had changed from desegregation, which might leave many one-race schools intact, to a conscious policy of integration, which aims to eliminate one-race schools altogether. Accordingly, "racially neutral" assignments by neighborhood were unacceptable if they left many one-race schools. So the Court told local officials to do whatever was necessary—including the use of racial quotas, the gerrymandering of districts, and the creation of noncontiguous attendance zones—in order to redistribute the white and black pupil populations into the same schools.

Swann was the first decision in which the Supreme Court declared that the Constitution required racial dispersion in order to achieve "the greatest possible degree of actual desegregation." This formulation was derived from the philosophy of the melting pot—of public schools that bring every element of the community together and reconcile their differences into a harmonious whole. This shift, as Alexander Bickel wrote at the time, grew out of "the original ambivalence" in the *Brown* decision. On one hand, *Brown* made it unconstitutional for the state to use racial classifications, except for remedial purposes. But on the other, *Brown* held that separate schools are inherently unequal.

"The implicit idea," wrote Bickel, "was that separate public schooling, whatever the cause of it or the means by which it was enforced, is unconstitutional because the function of the public school cannot be successfully performed unless children of all groups are taught in it together." This interpretation, which interweaves a theory of society and a theory of education, came to fruition in the *Swann* case.

After *Swann,* it would be increasingly difficult to make a valid distinction between de jure and de facto segregation. Though the Court held that not every school in every community would be expected to reflect the racial composition of the school system as a whole, it made

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plain that school authorities would have the burden of justifying the existence of any one-race schools.

There was no reason why the logic of *Swann* should be limited to formerly de jure segregated school systems, and the *Keyes* v. *Denver School District No. 1* decision in 1973 proved that it would not be. In that decision the Supreme Court took the principles that had accumulated with reference to southern schools and applied them in Denver, which had never operated legally segregated schools. The Denver School Board was found to have pursued certain policies, such as zoning, site selection, staff assignment, and neighborhood schools, that had segregated 38 percent of the black school population in identifiably black schools. Having determined that segregation existed "in a substantial portion of the district," the Court declared that Denver was unconstitutionally operating a dual system of de jure segregated schools. Neither a neighborhood school policy nor the plea that the illegal actions had occurred before 1954 was an adequate defense to the charges.

After *Keyes,* civil rights lawyers understood that diligent research was likely to produce the evidence to prove that a seemingly de facto segregated school system was actually an unconstitutional de jure segregated system. A permissive transfer policy was one such piece of evidence, for it was often used by white students to transfer out of schools that were growing blacker. Assignment of minority teachers to minority schools was another indication of a de jure policy, as was a conscious decision to build a school in a minority neighborhood. In one northern city after another, civil rights lawyers have found such evidence. In Pontiac, Michigan, school officials and real estate agents worked together to maintain racially homogeneous neighborhoods and schools; in Detroit, school attendance zones were manipulated to keep black and white students in different schools; in Boston, predominantly white schools were overcrowded while predominantly black schools had seats available.

But when such evidence has been found, it is not always certain that the policy makers intended to bring about racial segregation. In some instances, educationally valid assumptions have led to policies that were segregatory. Judges have condemned school authorities for building small schools; the district judge in Detroit held that a school for three hundred to four hundred pupils "negates opportunities to integrate, 'contains' the black population and perpetuates and compounds school segregation." But educators for at least the past decade have been saying that small schools are educationally preferable to large and impersonal schools. Another reason for small, neighborhood-based schools is to maximize parent and community involvement in the schools, a goal that

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most educators today believe is an essential part of the educational process. City-wide integration must be planned, administered, and enforced centrally, not locally. Parental involvement, moreover, becomes more difficult when children attend school in distant neighborhoods.

Black educators generally believe that it is educationally desirable to assign black teachers to predominantly black schools. But when judges and officials at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare's Office of Civil Rights look at faculty assignments for evidence of segregation, they expect that a properly integrated system will have distributed black teachers and administrators evenly throughout the schools. A western city recruited black teachers who had been specially trained to teach in inner-city schools and promised them inner-city assignments; yet HEW officials insisted that the black teachers had to be assigned evenly throughout the system in the interests of better staff integration. Similarly, a Boston judge, Arthur Garrity, rejected the argument that black teachers and black parents had requested assignment of minority staff to minority schools; the practice was unconstitutional, "whatever may be the desires of black teachers or parents."

What has become incredibly vague in the past several years is the precise meaning of "segregation," "desegregation," and "integration." In 1954, a segregated school system was one in which the state required or permitted separation of pupils on the basis of race. Black children were bused past white schools to attend distant black schools, and whites were similarly bused to white schools. Desegregation in 1954 appeared to mean that schools had to be color-blind and to accept whoever lived nearby or wanted to attend, regardless of race or color.

But since the *Swann* decision, the Supreme Court has specifically rejected a color-blind policy or any other policy that is apparently racially neutral, if such policies leave large numbers of racially identifiable schools intact. Given this standard, district courts have understood a segregated school to be one that is not racially balanced in terms of the entire district.

Thus, in Boston, Judge Garrity held that any school that deviated by more than 10 percent from the city-wide white-black pupil ratio of 61–32 percent was a segregated school. He found: "At least 80 percent of Boston's schools are segregated in the sense that their racial compositions are sharply out of line with the racial composition of the Boston public school system as a whole." A segregated school, under this definition, included a school that is 60 percent black and 40 percent white; technically, it would even include a school that was 50–50.

The logic of the racial balance definition reached the heights of

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absurdity in Detroit. Detroit's schools are presently 71 percent black. After the Supreme Court overruled a district court's merger of Detroit with nearby suburban school systems, the problem of desegregating Detroit itself was returned to a lower court. The NAACP proposed that every school have approximately 71 percent black children, and that any school varying by more than 15 percent would be considered segregated. The district judge turned down this plan as "rigid and inflexible . . . treating [pupils] as pigmented pawns to be shuffled about and counted solely to achieve an abstraction called 'racial mix.'" Under the plaintiffs' plan, he pointed out, a school that was 55 percent black would be considered a "racially identifiable white" school, while a school that was 85 percent black would be desegregated.

Massachusetts and New York states have defined a school that is composed of more than 50 percent minority pupils as a "racially imbalanced" school. State officials have taken the position that a racially imbalanced school is incapable of providing equal educational opportunity. In policy terms, this means that any school that is more than 50 percent black and/or Hispanic is an inferior school. From this perspective, real integration requires both racial balance and a white majority. Courts can order racial balance, but few major cities still have a white pupil majority.

As the black pupil population has grown in the cities, civil rights groups have urged that a segregated school is one where the racial balance varies sharply from the racial composition of the metropolitan area as a whole. When the Supreme Court refused to merge Detroit with its surrounding suburbs, it was because there had been no evidence that the suburban districts had practiced racially exclusionary policies. Civil rights lawyers believe they will be able to document segregatory practices on both sides of the city-suburban lines and will sooner or later win metropolitan-wide integration orders in northern cities. This would involve cross-district exchanges of black and white pupils and would make it possible to eliminate predominantly black schools.

The policy that the civil rights lawyers seek, and one that the reasoning of recent Supreme Court decisions appears to support, is a policy of governmentally mandated racial dispersion. During the past several years, and especially since the *Swann* decision, the Supreme Court appears to have declared that the law of the land supports the ideals of the melting pot.

The melting pot has been a strong and recurrent ideal in American history. It sets forth the hope that America would take the people of all nations and races and blend them together into a new and harmonious race. This new race of people would shed their ancient allegiances,

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rivalries, languages, and customs. "The melting and intermixture" of diverse nations, tribes, and races, in Ralph Waldo Emerson's words, would produce "a new race, a new religion, a new state, a new literature." According to Frederick Jackson Turner, it offered "the possibility of a newer and richer civilization . . . a new product, which held the promise of world brotherhood."

The melting-pot theory has always had its critics. In recent years, they have been divided between those who contend that it never worked and those who fear that it worked all too well. The former maintain that social planners should acknowledge the persistence and vitality of ethnicity in American life; the latter hold that the homogenization of American society has bred rootlessness, culturelessness, and anomie. Nearly all the critics agree that public policy should encourage cultural diversity.

The principle of cultural pluralism is as thoroughly American as the melting-pot idea. What pluralism means in practice is that diverse groups have the right to be left alone, so long as their members fulfill the basic obligations of citizenship. The state, in other words, cannot compel people to "melt," either culturally or racially. John Dewey described the American concept of pluralism as "a complete separation of nationality from citizenship. Not only have we separated language, cultural traditions, all that is called a race, from the state—that is, from problems of political organization and power. To us language, literature, creed, group ways, national culture, are social rather than political, human rather than national, interests."

How do these basic principles—the melting pot and cultural pluralism—apply to the issue of school integration? They are at the heart of the issue, but they mean different things to different people.

To those who support a policy of racial dispersion, the alternatives available are either integration or segregation; anything less is construed as a rationale for continuing the caste system. "The newly excited self-consciousness of 'white ethnics' is nothing more than a fresh awareness of what the institutions and customs of American society, including the segregated schools, have taught them from childhood, namely, that the United States of America is a white man's country," wrote a white NAACP official recently. "Desegregation is not the answer. It merely brings the races together; it does not supply the cement for a single society." The goal is "a pluralistic unitary society." From this perspective, the ideal school system would be one in which blacks and whites were evenly dispersed throughout a large metropolitan area so that no school could be stigmatized as a one-race school. This was the Supreme Court's assumption in the *Swann* decision, and it is the

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principle that the NAACP hopes to establish eventually in northern cities as well. The underlying social ideal is the melting-pot theory, the belief that in a truly free and nondiscriminatory society people would tend to settle in racially and ethnically mixed neighborhoods. Wherever they have not, runs the argument, it is only because of the workings of overt or covert patterns of discrimination, which government must remedy.

The pluralist response is that people must be permitted to cluster in whatever way they choose, even if it results in some one-race schools. So long as distinct neighborhoods and racially identifiable schools are not the consequence of any state action, argues the pluralist, then neither the schools nor the neighborhoods should be considered segregated in a legal sense. It is government's role to assure equal access to housing and schools and to remedy particular instances of discrimination, but it is not government's role to require specific percentages of racial mixing in neighborhoods or schools.

Each side believes the other to be racist, and both are at least partly right. The pluralist argument could be exploited by those who just do not want blacks to live in their neighborhood or go to their children's schools. The dispersionist argument is popularly understood to mean that predominantly black schools are inferior and that black students cannot learn unless they are in a predominantly white milieu. Unhappily, in a country with a history of slavery and Jim Crow institutions, either a policy of mandatory racial dispersion or a policy of color-blindness has racist overtones; that is the burden of the past.

When Americans urge one concept or the other on the public schools, they usually have in mind a certain kind of society that the schools are supposed to produce. Since American society is made up of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of different cultures and subcultures, the schools are incessantly torn between pressures to enforce unity and pressures to reinforce diversity.

The danger of extreme versions of either cultural separatism or monism must be recognized. A society in which pluralism reigns supreme verges on disintegration and anarchy, while a society that employs its schools to stamp out diversity moves toward totalitarianism. Reconciling these values is difficult but not impossible. Public schools should not become the vehicles for particular racial, religious, or ethnic groups. Those who want to teach the superiority of their cultural heritage should do so voluntarily. The public schools, as Robert Hutchins has written, "are dedicated to the maintenance and improvement of the public thing, the *res publica;* they are the common schools of the commonwealth, the political community." It is their

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primary task to prepare citizens who are capable of reading, thinking, discussing, participating, and voting.

The school can respect group differences while enabling its students to perceive the common concerns that transcend group and sectional barriers. The school will be better able to teach common understanding and shared values if it is not homogeneous. To the extent that it is demographically feasible, schools should bring children of different backgrounds together. This could come about if the education profession considered intercultural comity as vital a goal as small classes and good test scores, and if government agencies developed long-range policies to encourage and maintain stable, integrated neighborhoods. Ingenious educators, relying more on persuasion and incentives than on coercion, could devise a variety of special programs to connect public and private schools, city and suburban schools. No one should be made to feel, as a result of government action, that his school and his community are "no good."

In this murky period, while courts ponder and politicians quaver, there is a political consideration that has not escaped some black leaders. If blacks were distributed evenly across America and made up approximately 12 percent of every city, town, and hamlet, they would have little political power. Blacks, like the Irish and Italians before them, have won political office where there are sizable black concentrations. Blacks are aware that other groups have used political power to attain economic power. To be dispersed is to be placed in the role of a permanent dependent, a perpetual minority.

This realization, plus a growing awareness that desegregation is not necessarily linked to higher academic achievement, has caused many black politicians, leaders, and scholars to criticize the civil rights lawyers' single-minded pursuit of city-suburban mergers. Atlanta's black leadership, now in control of the city government and the school administration, has no interest in diluting its base of political power. Charles Hamilton, a professor of political science at Columbia and successor to integrationist Kenneth Clark as president of the Metropolitan Applied Research Center, testified against busing before a congressional committee; Hamilton believes that blacks need economic and political self-sufficiency more than they need racially balanced schools.

Derrick Bell, professor of law at Harvard and a former civil rights lawyer, has written that civil rights lawyers have not adjusted their tactics to take into account the demographic changes since 1954. While they press unswervingly for racial balance, the cities get blacker and the

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educational needs of black children are ignored. Ronald Edmonds, director of the Center for Urban Studies at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, has complained that desegregation orders frequently deny black parents the right to make educational choices for their children. Howard University's Kenneth Tollett, while approving of desegregation initiatives in elementary and secondary schools, fears that the next legal onslaught will imperil black colleges and universities, which continue to serve important educational, psychological, and cultural functions for blacks. Economist Thomas Sowell of UCLA holds that it is untrue that black schools are inherently unequal; he maintains that excellence has nothing to do with ethnicity.

Those blacks who are critical of the current thrust of the integration movement are not separatists; they are professionals who move in a racially mixed world and who value integration. They share a common fear that black institutions will be stigmatized by the implicit insult that whatever is black is inferior. They have been groping for language to express their views without giving aid and comfort to the George Wallaces and Louise Day Hickses of America. The idea that blacks should reject black institutions has been so deeply ingrained that most of the critics feel they must apologize for appearing to be disloyal to the spirit of *Brown*. Each in his own way has been trying to evolve a pluralist position for blacks that grants black institutions and organizations the same legitimacy as is accorded those of other ethnic groups, without in any way diminishing the opportunity for full interracial contact. "We will not be free," says Charles Hamilton, "until we have freed ourselves of the mentality of dependency. We must no longer be white America's permanent ward and favorite cause."

The emergence of thoughtful dissent among blacks is perhaps the healthiest trend in the evolution of race relations in America. So long as the question of assimilation is resolved by whites on behalf of blacks, then blacks remain in a subordinate, unequal position. It is blacks who must decide on what terms they wish to relate to other members of American society. The present debate among blacks about how, when, and whether to be integrated is likely to end not in unanimity but in a diversity of responses. Some will want to live in predominantly white worlds, others will not. The role of government must not be to choose a "right" answer, but to preserve the same options for blacks that are now available to everyone else.

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Getting Off the Bullock Cart
Thoughts on Educational Reform

ALEXANDER GERSCHENKRON

NOTHING IS SO GOOD THAT IT CANNOT BENEFIT FROM CRITICISM. No criticism is so justified that its weaknesses can be ignored. The rather flat truth of these propositions applies to the following cogitations about the ways in which we teach our college students. Both the object of criticism and the critic must be seen in perspective. As far as concerns the latter, it should be pointed out from the outset that my thoughts on the subject are based on the nearly three decades of instruction at Harvard, where I taught mostly graduate students and had no contact worth mentioning with Harvard's tutorial system. The remembrance of the few years of teaching undergraduate classes at Berkeley only serves to supplement the present recapitulation of my teaching experience. The reader will do well to keep in mind the spatial and other limitations of that experience while perusing the following strictures.

But in dealing with American colleges and universities, blame should not be allowed to overshadow altogether the praise where it is well deserved. Therefore, something must be said first on the general superiority of the American institutions of learning (lower and higher) over their continental counterparts in Europe.

Thinking back on my own experience as a student at the University of Vienna as well as in the *gymnasia* both in Russia and in Austria, and generalizing with considerable intrepidity, I should say that the root of the trouble with the continental educational system lies at the level of their secondary schools.

A European *gymnasium* on the Continent covers an unbelievably wide range of subjects, all of which the students are forced to take. There are no loopholes. To give a rather frightening example, the eight years' course in an Austrian *gymnasium* included instruction (and successful

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passing) in the following subjects: German literature, French, Latin, History, Geography, Mathematics, with Descriptive Geometry added as a special subject, Physics, Chemistry, Zoology, Botany, Mineralogy, Geology, Somatology (which is the lore of the human body), Psychology, Logic, and Free Drawing.

On a superficial judgment, the graduates from such a school would be regarded as young men beneficially equipped with a broad "general education." But how were those subjects taught? Take history for instance, the instruction in which was extensive indeed. It started in the first year (ten-year-old children) with Ancient History, continued the next year with Medieval History; then came a year of Modern History, and the fourth year was devoted to Local History. Thereupon the whole sequence was repeated, allegedly on a higher level, in the next four years. Yet all the students had to study during those eight years were eight textbooks the contents of which had to be memorized. In none of those textbooks, be it at a high or low level, was any historical *problem* ever mentioned. There was never any question of interpretation, and no texts of any great historian, or excerpts therefrom, were ever read. The endeavor was to transmit basic knowledge of facts, rather than promote judgment and understanding. The students were never required to produce written papers in the subject.

Or take the instruction in Latin. There the classic writers were read and translated, up to Tacitus and Horace. The Russian school, it may be added, never reached comparable heights of difficulty. But what was being taught were linguistic techniques rather than historical or aesthetic appreciation. The emphasis throughout was on grammar and syntax. The students were well initiated into the mysteries of the "double-ut" construction which surprisingly required the indicative. But conveying an idea of Roman thought or of the beauty of Latinity emphatically was *not* the purpose at all. The everyday life in ancient Rome was too low a subject to touch upon, and so the students never knew that there were such things as the letters of Pliny the Younger or the treatises on life and work in agriculture.

Or, finally, take Mathematics. In the last years, differential calculus was taught, supplemented by a bit of integral calculus. The Russian *gymnasium* or even *Realschule* never got that high. But the teaching of differential calculus amounted to protracted and intensive drilling in mechanical solving of problems. At that some success was attained. The techniques of differentiation were well learned. But what was not attempted at all was to explain to the students what calculus was all about. When, years after graduation, this particular student, purely by chance,

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came across S. P. Thompson's little book *Calculus Made Easy,* he was amazed how many highly exciting things could be said about the history and meaning of calculus, particularly in connection with organic growth. Thompson's *volumetto* was a tremendous, needlessly and stupidly delayed eye-opener.

Similarly in Physics you were put through the history of classical Physics, shrinking away timidly from modern times. Again, there was nothing but achievements (laws) to be memorized—no problems, no disagreements, and no idea of continuities and discontinuities in the history of science.

Some limited opportunity for independent thinking was given by the few German and French essays. But otherwise faithful memorizing of a single noncontroversial textbook and industrious doing of mathematical problems and exercising in Latin syntax were perfectly sufficient to push you through the eight years and to equip you with the coveted graduation certificate (*Matura-Zeugnis*) which alone entitled you to embark upon studies at the university and at the same time in those days lifted you socially above the vast majority of the population. At the same time, the secondary school, despite its many disabilities, was not an easy school. On the contrary, there were many opportunities to fail. And if in any year the student failed in a single subject, he had to repeat the same year in *all* subjects. Thereby he was torn from the social context of the class (for the class and not the subject was the unit of instruction); in addition the repeater (a very opprobrious thing to be) first felt that he had already learned it all, took things easy at the beginning, very soon missed the bus, and in the end, as likely as not, was flunked out of school altogether since a second repeating was prohibited. Thus the eight years of the school were not only distinguished by the lack of intellectual stimulation, but also were years of continual pressure and fears.*

The graduate entered the university, crammed with a great deal of dead knowledge as a well-trained learner, but quite inarticulate orally, and without any notion as to how one goes independently about acquiring knowledge. For the secondary school, reputedly preparing for the university, did absolutely nothing about teaching its students how to do

* It is, therefore, not surprising that the schools lived on in anguished and unpleasant memories. In saying this I am not even referring to the familiar phenomenon of the *Matura-Traum,* the anxious dream which followed many graduates for decades. Egon Schiele in his remembrances spoke bitterly of the "must-times" in the "lifeless schools" and of the "crude teachers who always were my enemies." Cf. Wieland Schmied, "Egon Schiele," *Neue oesterreichische Biographie ab 1815,* Vol. XVIII, Vienna 1972. Similarly, Rainer Maria Rilke complained in a well-known poem:

Da rinnt der Schule lange Angst und Zeit
Mit Warten hin, mit lauter dumpfen Dingen
. . . O schweres Zeitverbringen.

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research. A passive training yielded a passive, uncritical, and intellectually inert body of students.

And the university? Was it just like the *gymnasium?* In some respects yes, in others no. There was suddenly much freedom (for which one was entirely unprepared) and a nearly complete lack of supervision. The student was not expected to be present at the lectures, except that he was equipped with a booklet in which his registration for the courses was entered and in which at the start and the end of the semester the professor put down his initials. A beadle (Pedell) for a small gratuity put the booklets on the professor's desk to be initialed, so that the student could safely stay away from all lectures. At the Law Faculty, for instance, he was entirely free for two years, at the end of which he had to present himself for a series of examinations, and then again at the end of four years. Upon successful passing of these examinations, the student was awarded the degree of Doctor of Law.

But who was present at the lectures? A tiny group of addicts, a negligible proportion of the class, and a few professional notetakers who had their notes mimeographed and then sold them to the absent majority to be memorized before the examinations. In the last months before the examination most students attended flourishing cramming schools where all the questions (the examinations were oral and public) had been faithfully recorded along with the approved answers. The slack majority was in no way worse for staying away from lectures. Most lectures were read rather than delivered freely. Interruptions and class discussion were unknown. There were no course examinations. There were no collateral readings. There were no term papers, except that in the course of four years, in some fields, such as Social Sciences, for instance, some very superficial pro-Seminar and Seminar papers of some ten to fifteen pages had to be handed in, the grade, unless a failing one, being of no consequence at all. There were no regular office hours and, withal, no possibility at all for any contact with the professor during the course of study, except that some of the previously mentioned "addicts" upon an oral performance in a seminar might be invited to join a "privatissimum," that is to say a private seminar of the professor, a path that might lead to the coveted but ill-defined position of an assistant. Except for this uncertain and unregulated way of raising an elite, no provision at all was made for giving the older students an opportunity for instructing the young ones.

In general, the doctor's degree was cheaply acquired not only at the Faculty of Law. In Social Sciences (*Staatswissenschaften*), for instance, at the end, first of three, and then of four years, the student, in addition to

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presenting himself to two *Rigorosa* (the severity of the examination lying exclusively in its name), also had to submit a doctoral thesis, usually of some 120–150 pages, and in substance being hardly more sophisticated than the undergraduate honor thesis at Harvard or the term papers which the graduate students at Harvard had to compose for me twice a year in fulfilling the requirement of my course in economic history. Yet that meager preparation (for the *Rigorosum,* again in each subject, the good knowledge of the lecture notes and of a single text was quite sufficient for passing) led fairly safely to the grandiloquent degree of *doctor rerum politicarum,* which also I quietly acquired, covering myself neither with glory nor with shame in the process.

Turning from the so sketched educational system to the United States, the superiority of the American system should stand out clearly. I do appreciate the fact that the quality of the American high school varies greatly from state to state and even from locality to locality within some states. But looking at the *good* American public high school, I have no doubt in my mind that the fundamental approach is vastly different. True, the amount of largely useless knowledge pumped into our high school student is a fraction of what has to find room in the head of a continental sufferer. But the American student when writing papers is expected to go to a public library, to collect for himself the relevant literature, and to use it as critically as he can, making in the process several decisions of his own; in short, to do a number of things that are the stuff research is made of. And at school he is not expected to confine himself to memorizing a single noncontroversial text. He learns that all knowledge is in flux and debatable.

I am not arguing that even a good American high school cannot be improved. Of course it can. For instance, the extreme freedom of selecting the subjects could well be reduced. Thus, I know from conversations with my students that one year of Latin is worse than useless and that the student, once he has made his selection, should be obligated to go on for an additional one or two years. And yet, when everything is said and done, the graduates from a good high school in the United States constitute excellent college material, because they have received a notion not merely of how to go about learning, but about learning *and* thinking.

This stands out in my memory when thinking of the undergraduates in Berkeley in the late thirties. The main thing about them was that they, though ignorant of many simple things, were entirely unafraid, full of curiosity, knew how to fill the gaps in their knowledge, and were quite ready for a college system where, at least in principle, the student feels

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that he can interrupt and criticize the lecturer and sometimes even be challenged to do so, and where he is given a long list of controversial collateral readings, and can approach the professor in his office. All those things are not accessible to his continental counterpart, to whom the idea that he can express an independent judgment of the professor is quite alien. And never mind whether the judgment be positive or negative.

Let me give a curious example: A great Swedish scholar, the late Professor Eli F. Heckscher, probably the most considerable economic historian of this century, once told me how surprised he was when, after having delivered a guest-lecture at Williams College in Massachusetts, an undergraduate walked up to him to express his admiration for the lecture. It was a marvelous lecture, he said. This was downright un-Swedish, and Heckscher felt that it was bordering on impertinence on the part of the student to presume that he was capable of forming any judgment of the quality of a lecture given by a distinguished scholar. The little episode is a good illustration of the spiritual milieu of a continental university. Yet while the positive aspects of our universities must not be overlooked, particularly in a comparative light, their shortcomings and potentialities for improvement must not be neglected either. The remainder of this paper will deal with these disabilities and the possible ways of reducing or removing them.

Without any doubt, the lectures constitute the carrying pillar of our educational edifice of higher learning. That was so in the Middle Ages and is still so despite all the numerous technological inventions and innovations that should make lecturing obsolete or should have made it so a long time ago. Under these conditions, instructors should have guilty consciences and feel an urge to justify sticking to a pattern of education that was indeed natural and without alternatives many centuries ago, but is neither natural nor irremediable now. But the voice of conscience is silenced and the urge suppressed. Why? Surely because lecturing is such a delightful activity which not only, in Lewis Carroll's words, "gives muscular strength to the jaw," but lets the physical satisfaction be accompanied by psychic pleasures. And indeed, how and where else could a man get these regular opportunities for hearing himself talk undisturbed for an hour or so? Certainly not at home, where the most patient and best-mannered wife would break out in a few crudities.

Let us visualize the average lecture, say an early morning lecture. First, the students come in, sit around chatting idly or reading the

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newspapers. Then the main actor appears, walks to his desk, spreads and orders his notes, blows his nose, and finally opens his mouth to pronounce the sacral phrase, "Last time at the end of the period . . ." And then? We assume an instructor in good possession of his faculties and a fair memory. He does not, as sometimes happens, mistakenly proceed to repeat the previously given lecture. Our man knows well what he is doing. He does not indulge in the aposiopetic style, of which President Eisenhower used to be such a master, and leads every sentence to successful termination.

Nevertheless, at times he runs in idle gear, and while he keeps talking he does not always quite say anything. Being an observant man, he notices that the students' pens are used to scratch their foreheads and concludes that attention is flagging. This calls for remedy which may be of two kinds. Either the lecturer simulates a stream of free association (oh, incidentally, it occurs to me . . .) and weaves in an oft-tried joke or a little story with a moderately funny punch line, which every laborer of this craft must keep ready in his educational toolbox. Alternatively, he becomes polemical and says, "But this position is untenable for four reasons," and proceeds to list them: "First . . . Second . . . Third . . . Fourth . . ." The effect is certain and instantaneous. The forehead-scratching pens are immediately lowered and begin to scratch the paper busily. Naturally so, because the four points must enter the notebooks to be later memorized so that still later they can be boomeranged at the professor at the course examination, on which more later.

That lecturing is a source of considerable joys is indubitable. In a grand story Chekhov, as a man of twenty-nine, described with the perception and intuition of genius both the techniques of lecturing as well as the delights thereof as told by a very famous old professor: "No discussion, no entertainment, no game ever gave me an enjoyment comparable to lecturing. Only when lecturing did I feel wholly possessed by passion and understood that inspiration is not just an invention of poets, but is something that actually does exist in reality. And I believe that Heracles after the most passional of his deeds could not have felt the delicious fatigue which overcomes me after lectures" (A. P. Chekhov, *A Boring Story,* 1889).

Chekhov's hero was limned as a pedagogical genius. Our common lecturer is not that at all. But even the common man derives much centripetal pleasure from the hour of being the focus of the show and from the showing-off involved. He may not compare his sentiments to that aroused in Heracles's chest by the mass deflowering of virgins in a single night, but he certainly has a post-lecture sense of having done an

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honest bit of strenuous work and of being entitled to some rest before betaking himself to the Faculty Club (gobble and gabble) for a light conversation over lunch with colleagues.

If the main purpose of lectures were to make instructors happy, the institution would stand well-vindicated. But what about the target of lecturing? What about the students? I believe that students like lectures. First of all, it is a very commodious, passive way of learning or rather of satisfying the requirements. All they have to do is to take copious notes of those things which in their opinion they will have to transform later into answers to the questions of the course examination. Second, they are bored and like to be entertained, and a lecturer who knows how to display a sense of humor in relevant and irrelevant asides can be certain of approval.

And so is a lecturer who in order to raise interest and win approval mixes syncretically the positive with the normative. An instructor lecturing on the distribution of incomes is likely to do more than measure the inherent degree of equality and inequality. He is tempted to make known his preference for a more egalitarian distribution, if he feels that such a position would go over well. And possibly he may even arrange his material in such a fashion as to anticipate subtly and strengthen the normative conclusion. There is no doubt that the desire to please and to acquire popularity is strong upon the minds of a good many lecturers. It is in this way that the fame of being a "great teacher" is cheaply acquired at the price of some humorous or sarcastic asides and of casting some scholarly scruples into the wind. I realize that the question of mixing politics and scholarship is a highly controversial one. There is no need for me to go into this matter here. Let me just confine myself, without conjuring up Max Weber's ghost, to expressing my view that presenting private beliefs and preferences syncretically in the guise of scholarship is a sin against its spirit.

Because students' approval is so easily secured, they are by and large poor judges of the quality of the lectures. Their preferences are distinctly against improvisations by the lecturer. A lecturer who thinks creatively on his feet and to whom many a new thought occurs under the stimulus of expressing himself aloud, and who, therefore, is likely to go off on all sorts of tangents, such a brilliant man is unlikely to find much favor with his listeners. For what they want above all (witticisms and revelation of congenial political views apart) is what is known as "a well-organized lecture." For such a lecture yields clear and full notes readily usable for the course examination. By contrast, the scintillating brilliancies are likely to result in a disorderly, poorly organized lecture, of little use for

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the practical purpose of the examination, which, too, deserves a few words.

Course examinations can also be improved. As they are, students usually are cooped up for three hours which they spend in filling with nervous haste in illegible scrawl a maximum of pages in the bluebooks. Those bluebooks are then graded by the instructor, and unfortunately very often by a number of teaching assistants. A few years ago, it was fashionable for students to decry grading as involving competition, as allegedly antiegalitarian and a cynosure of "meritocracy." This popular half-literate neologism was invented in forgetting that it had taken centuries to get rid of the "demeritocracy" of aristocracy where the attributed status of birth rather than the achieved status of talent (or merit) was the basis of distinction.

It was with reference to descent and pedigrees (the assertion of which, of course, scorns any reasonable probability calculus) that Goethe wrote the revolutionary lines:

Mit schrecklichen Gebaerden
Gibt man sich grosse Pein,
Kein Mensch will etwas werden,
Ein jeder will was sein.

That the passing over of wealth to the progeny by inheritance was (for the progeny) a form of relapse into the ways of aristocracy was conveniently overlooked by those allegedly radical children of the well-to-do classes of the population. That it was the function of any system of instruction to separate the goats from the sheep was not considered by people carried away by misunderstood egalitarianism and who thought nothing of treating loafers and nincompoops on a par with students displaying industry, understanding, and independence of thought: a lack of distinction which would wreck the fairest social system imaginable. It was particularly foolish when ideas of the type were expressed by the graduate students from among whom teaching assistants were to be selected, and accordingly the danger of foisting incompetent teachers upon the undergraduates was to be apprehended.

Such as they are, both the course examinations and the grading of bluebooks are still a form of connection, even though tenuous, between instructors and students, a connection that is so regrettably absent from continental universities. But this does not mean that our present system is not in need of improvement. One way of reinforcing the connection would be to make it obligatory for the student to see the grader after the examination so that the grade could be explained to the student and

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discussed with him. Reasonable as such an innovation would be, it is likely to be resisted both by instructors and students. By the former because of the additional effort involved, and by the latter because in the process of discussing the examination paper the instructor may come to feel that the paper has been overgraded and be tempted to reduce the grade.

At any rate, a much more effective way of appraising the student's performance would be to do away altogether with written examinations and to substitute for them a number of oral examinations in manageable small groups. Examinations so conducted would make it possible for the examiner to probe much more deeply into the students' knowledge, and in the process remove misunderstandings of both the lectures and readings. Such an examination, partaking inevitably of the character of a discussion group, would be pedagogically infinitely superior to the impersonal and superficial written examination. In my own experience, I did conduct such examinations with good and fair results with the undergraduates at Berkeley.

But my attempts to make my graduate students at Harvard agree to such a change were invariably rejected by the students because poorer students feared competition and better students feared to appear overbearing and conceited. A capable and tactful instructor could easily demonstrate that those fears were unfounded. But the main reasons for rejection lay elsewhere. Either group understood that in an oral examination one could not get away with bluffing and would be less able to disguise the shallowness of the preparation. And above all, I am afraid there was a general distrust of innovation. Incidentally, as far as bluffing goes, the written examination almost invites it. Once I included among my questions one that perhaps had been imperfectly covered by lectures and readings. A Harvard graduate student wrote two or three lines and then burst out in the following note: "Sir, this question is unfair! I can't even blough [*sic*]." Yet even if the students' agreement and interested cooperation could be secured, there would still be red-tape difficulties with changing the university rules that at present govern the written examinations and make-up examinations. A change of this sort would have to start from "above" rather than in the classroom. And in addition, to repeat, the members of the faculty would shrink away from the additional encroachment upon their time which oral examinations would entail, as, in fact, would any reasonable reform of the present system.

But let us return to lectures. How good are they? The answer to this question is not easy. Since, for reasons previously given, students' opin-

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ion cannot be safely relied upon, one must fall back on impressions and general cogitations. As far as the latter go, it should be remembered that we do not train our professors *qua* lecturers, even though in principle it would be possible to do so, taking the leaf from the imaginative ideas and techniques of the socialist school reformers in Vienna of the 1920s which had charmed Ludwig Wittgenstein so much. As it is, the matter is left to the pedagogical talent of the individual. It is fairly clear that a truly great lecturer is *rara avis* in our academic skies. The average lecturer, untrained pedagogically, may be quite satisfactory at times, but on the whole is likely to be an indifferent performer.

As a beginner, he is timid, fears to get stuck in confusion or in loss of memory and therefore in giving a lecture sticks slavishly to his notes; which lecture as likely as not is not even truly his own, but one copied more or less verbatim from his old notes of lectures from the time when he himself had been a graduate student. But this is a highly transitional phase, because then he begins preparing his own lectures, doing it with great care and investing perhaps as much as fifteen hours of preparation for one hour in class. After a few years he finds himself a happy possessor of a course which is all his own. At this stage he probably delivers the best lectures of his career.

But then he finds himself faced with the idea of publishing a textbook and begins to worry about the pros and cons of the matter. Textbooks are money-earning propositions. But their publication makes the old course obsolete and requires investment of much time and effort in the preparation of a new course. This might mean that the research projects to which the man's heart is really devoted would have to be postponed for a very long time. There are certainly gifted people around in the universities who can successfully discharge all the different tasks. But there are also less gifted and less industrious men who decide not to publish the textbook, and rather work on their research and continue with the old course. Over the years, the course gets indeed improved and amplified here, there, and yonder by insertions from additional readings and from some new ideas perhaps derived from research, if it is at all connected with the course. But basically, it remains the old course and continues to be given for a long time to come. Repeated year-in, year-out, the lectures are recited with smooth assurance coming from habit, and the course tends to become a faithful replica of a popular Broadway play. The quality of the lectures is likely to decline, because the lecturer himself finds neither stimulation nor interest in the reiteration of his monologues, however well spoken. The substance of the course may be very good, but the oral lecture as the medium for its transmission to the

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students is dreadfully awkward and inefficient at a time that is no longer that of the schoolmen. According to the lines of a German poet,

Drum ist die Erde ja ums Paradies betrogen,
Weil ihre Luft ertoent von langen Monologen.

The Thespis cart, loaded with indifferent actors, offers a rather sorry spectacle of our educational system. Can it be improved? There are, of course, lectures conceivable and some actually given that are not monologues, that do not reduce the students to the role of passive listeners, and that cannot be replaced by any mechanical device. This is a lecture which is essentially based on, or given around, class discussion. We may call it the problem lecture. In such a lecture, the lecturer spends a few minutes in presenting the problem and then offering it for class discussion. After the problem has been sufficiently discussed by the students jointly with the lecturer, the latter offers a brief summary of the main points and then proceeds to introduce the next problem. Thus transformed, the lecture—no longer truly a lecture—becomes a stimulating, thought-provoking educational instrument. What goes through the student's mind during the discussion, the need to articulate his opinion and to defend it against the other students and the instructor are things that are likely to continue to ferment and are not easily forgotten. Thus, the problem lecture may be regarded as the ideal form of class instruction. If it is, as I believe, used so sparingly, the reason must lie in a number of serious obstacles to its widespread use.

First of all, to conduct a class effectively in this fashion presupposes possession of special skills by the instructor. Both presenting the problem clearly as such and guiding the discussion along worthwhile channels is not easy. The task is infinitely more demanding and more delicate than the delivery of a well-memorized monologue. Second, some material just does not lend itself readily to the problem-discussion treatment. And third, there is the size of the class to be considered. In principle, the students may be asked to intervene by asking questions and making observations even in very large classes. Such opportunities are frequently given and are also used. But experience also shows that in a very large class, it is usually very few students who happen to be extremely articulate and endowed with a good capacity for instantaneous reasoning that monopolize the interventions, while the bulk of the class remains entirely passive, either enjoying the little breaks in the lecturer's speech or being annoyed by the forward behavior of their few colleagues.

To be sure, large classes and particularly excessively large classes are

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not going to remain with us to the Greek Calends. A time will come in the future when our gross national product not only will have grown, but also will have outgrown the increments in the number of college students from the strata of the population who as yet have not attained college levels in their educational careers. Then the size of classes will be greatly reduced and obversely the faculty-student ratios will be greatly increased. Then the weight of this particular impediment to the introduction of sensible and effective methods of instruction will tend to vanish. But at present this is still very much music of the future.

What can be done immediately is to begin moving by persuasion, though not by suasion, toward problem lectures whenever the lecturer's ability, the nature of the course, and the size of the class allow it. For the rest, however, it is desirable to consider seriously a shift away *from the lectures* in two directions: (1) much greater emphasis on the use of the libraries by students, and (2) increase in the importance of office hours. Reading, of course, is the adult way of learning and not the lower school-like sitting and listening to the flow of the teacher's speech. It is also a much more economical way in terms of time spent and the results achieved. As F. L. Lucas put it in his concise way: "One can read faster than anybody can talk. One can skip. One can re-read what a first reading left obscure."*

Lucas might have added that reading not only allows fuller and more accurate note taking than the nervous jotting down of a lecturer's points, which almost inevitably at times are misspoken and off and on are presented in a voice that is far from clear. Besides, notes taken on readings can be, and mostly are, interspersed with the student's own thoughts denoting his stimulations, approvals, and disapprovals. This is something which, except for an occasional question mark and an expletive, cannot be done in the process of note taking in the dreamy atmosphere of the classroom. It is true, of course, that also reading in the library does not ensure perfect concentration. As a young lady recently wrote me, the quiet of the library may make you doze off, just as much as the lecturer's monotone. The only answer to that correct observation is that people who tend to fall asleep in libraries should look urgently for a job in a particularly noisy factory, which may be very beneficial anyhow for a number of reasons.

But where would such a shift from the classroom to the library leave the instructor? Obviously something would have to change so as to provide compensation for the reduced role of the lectures. As said before,

* F. L. Lucas, "On Books," *The Greatest Problem and Other Essays* (1961), p. 154.

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the professor's office hours are one of the most positive features of our college instruction. They offer the opportunities for personal contact between students and instructors which is so sadly lacking in continental universities in Europe. As it is now, they could—and should—be considerably expanded by the initiative of the students. But despite all the widespread students' complaints about inadequate opportunities to get in touch with the instructors, such an initiative is rarely in evidence, which, incidentally, casts doubt on the seriousness and sincerity of the complaints.

It is true, however, that office hours are rather loosely built into our system. The instructor is vaguely supposed to be available for consultations; yet except perhaps in the very first week of the term, the frequency and duration of office hours are more or less left to the free choice of the professor and remain unregulated otherwise. What *is* regulated are the lectures. The teaching obligation is commonly measured by the number of class hours per week. This is taken seriously. In the case of a professor's illness during term, either he himself or his department finds a substitute to meet the classes. But the office hours remain unsubstituted for. A professor who from absentmindedness or from negligence begins cutting his classes, in all likelihood will pretty soon find himself disciplined in one way or another. Not so with office hours. Official records of them hardly exist, and the chairmen of the departments are blissfully unaware of the matter.

If this situation, regrettable as I find it, is fairly tolerable as long as lectures remain the professor's foremost duty, it would become quite unbearable if the main emphasis in instruction were to shift from classes to library. Then a well-regulated opportunity must be created for students to discuss the problems raised in their minds by work on their reading lists, which naturally would have to become much longer. Then it may well prove necessary to establish a professor's regulated working day of, say, three daily hours from Monday to Friday to be dedicated to office hours. And time and place of office hours would have to be incorporated in the university catalogs just as class meetings are today. What matters, of course, is the recognition of the principle and not the details. Whether the office hours would be devoted to individual students or held in small groups is surely something that could be safely left to the decision of the professor; and so may be the method by which the individual student who is registered in the course is obligated to present himself at office hours.

Clearly, it is not the readings alone that would be discussed at such meetings. The purpose of rendering the learning process more active can

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be effectively accomplished by requiring every student to prepare a research term paper, whenever the nature of the course makes it possible. And, therefore, the theme of the term paper first and then its progress throughout the term should form the subject of conversations during office hours. Naturally, after the paper has been handed in, read, and graded, the student should receive an opportunity to get his professor's critical opinion of the finished product. Needless to add, such a reform would silence once and for all the previously mentioned students' complaints about the alleged inaccessibility and inapproachability of the faculty.

There is little doubt in my mind that a change along the lines sketched in the preceding paragraphs would greatly increase the pedagogical value of our college instruction, particularly for graduate students. The students would pursue adult rather than puerile (or "puellan") ways of learning, and the instructors would become real teachers paying much more attention and understanding to the students' learning problems.

At the same time, I am under no illusion about the likelihood that such changes will be put to a practical test soon. They do involve a substantial increase in the work load placed upon professorial shoulders. Perhaps somewhat less so for the young or youngish instructor who spends the aforementioned long hours in preparing his courses. But for the faculty as a whole the increase in burden would be considerable. Clearly, it would be most important to keep the reform within limits which would prevent it from undue encroachment upon time to be devoted to research. But even a moderate reform would necessarily interfere with inveterate habits and well-established arrangements of everyday life. One must expect, therefore, that the faculty would tend to resist any movement toward change.

Such resistance would make it very difficult for any single university to act as a bold innovator and to adopt trail-blazing reforming measures, because its attractiveness in hiring new faculty members or retaining the old ones would be reduced thereby. And the present budgetary stringencies in our colleges would probably make it impossible for the innovating university to offer sufficient pecuniary compensations to its faculty.

Nor can one reasonably expect any real interest of the students in such reforms. Larger reading lists, additional term papers, regular interviews with the professors in which account of the students' work would have to be given, oral examinations—all these mean considerable increase in standards. And on the basis of my experience in the past

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decade or so, I must regretfully conclude that all the proposals and ideas that were popular with students invariably involved lowering rather than raising of scholarly standards. The desire to get the degree, whatever it be, as cheaply as possible in terms of time and effort spent all too often seemed to be the guiding motivation behind those proposals. And indeed in the troublous years of unrest such pseudo-reforms were foisted by the students through threats upon a frightened and supine faculty.

And yet, however pessimistic one must be at the moment, it does not seem probable that in the very long run things will remain as they are now. Their present inadequacies are too much at variance with the searching spirit of the country. The inert adherence to a system that is essentially medieval and altogether pre-Gutenberg is bound to become more and more incongruous to the critical eye. We have traveled much too long on an educational bullock cart. The time will come when the pressure to change to a more modern form of locomotion will become irresistible.

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Visitors

VERN RUTSALA

Speck on the map that it was
The town seemed big
Some swirled place near the center
Somehow the right place
And we expected the famous to come
And they did every one
Aimee Semple McPherson
Closed all the bars for a day
And that went into our talk on the corner
Picked over like a Christmas turkey
Until we got thirsty
There was that long summer
With its list of the famous
Robert Young Spencer Tracy Walter Brennan
Though among those actors
The general favorite
Was Isabel Jewell
Yes we knew that if they knew
Everyone would come
And they did one by one
Water ski champs and donkey baseball
Even the tallest man in the world
His apple box shoe
Displayed with bunting
In the drugstore window
A handsome man
A lawyer they said
Though we thought
Being that tall
Was job enough for anyone
We chewed over these legends
On the corner
And felt the justice
In their coming to see us

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We knew we counted
We knew we were a secret center
And knew the visitors
Would live here too
If they could
Only the Globetrotters
Left a strange frenzy
No one could quite handle
And for years after
The town team was poor
The boys all arms and legs
The ball a stranger in their hands

VERN RUTSALA, who teaches at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, is author of *The Window and Laments*. His poetry has appeared in *Poetry*, *The New Yorker*, and the *Hudson Review*.

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Through Dark St. Kevins

MICHAEL CALVELLO

I remember the walk
through dark St. Kevins
an altar boy passing
the baptism vestibule—
his feet echoing
up the center aisle
of marriage and deaths,
mosaic inscriptions
of a Thursday night holy hour

Rheumatic under white and gold vestments,
Father Guerin waits
in the quiet sacristy,
waits for me
to click open
the metal communion rail latch
and genuflect beneath
the tabernacle candle
burning in red glass

And in the room
across from his,
the service begins—
holding a round black charcoal,
I light the edges
with a thick kitchen match,
then with one finger,
I level the small golden spoon
of incense
for the benediction of innocence
in the closed vestry

'Son. Are you ready?'
his slow voice asks

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across the dark space
between our rooms
in back of the altar

There, the electric box hangs
on the wall—
so, in answer,
I switch on all the lights
with my ten fingers,
the levers snapping all at once
for the ten or twelve people
scattered in wooden pews

And under the bulbed chandeliers,
we sit on a brown mahogany bench
where he reads from a yellow book
until it is time
to move to the altar again.
He steps above me,
raising stiffening arms
to begin his prayer.
I kneel on the first step
of red carpet
and sprinkle incense
on the burning charcoal—
the smoke grey-sweet
rises when he turns
and shows the Blessed Sacrament,
its metal strips
and colored stones
swinging in his hands—
and looking down
he nods his head at me
so I ring the small gold bell
in answer again.

Now the old priest is dead.
And I, too, have left
that ghost of an altar boy

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running down towards Father Guerin
sitting in the dark
his body stiffening
as I helped him
in and out of his garments

Was it a naïve smoke I burnt?
And the ringing bell in supplication—
was it a sound
to mock now
or that mocks me?
That demands a dichotomy of seasons,
a polarity of spring
and the new snow—
demands this poem
of words falling
to some order

Outside of St. Kevins
wind is moving
through that dark holy hour,
and I move, have to,
in spite
of myself

✪ MICHAEL CALVELLO's poems have appeared in *Hyperion*, the *American Pen*, *Bartleby's Review*, and other journals.

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The Proper Study

I. A. Richards

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
The proper study of mankind is man.
Pope, *Essay on Man*

Ignore thyself, and seek to know thy God.
Coleridge, *Self-knowledge*

Know, therefore, that thou art a god.
Cicero, *Scipio's Dream*
(viii, 2)

Mindless the night, maybe,
That was and will be here,
And *here*'s for ever
What must be most near.

Mindful, though memoryless,
Of the heretofore,
What should we but seek on,
Seek even to ignore?

Conceiving the pursued,
Whatever name we lend,
Whatever guise it take,
Must be our source and end.

Thyself: how variant
The volatile soul can be!
Thy God: what presences,
Divined as variously!

While what these words
May mean is hit or miss,

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The study proper
To us all is this.

May not these two quests be
At heart the same,
A single search misguided
By a double name?

The desolate aims
Through which the soul is sought
Are mirror-imaged
In the selves they've wrought.

So sacred mimers
For their dances dress,
As though possessed
By that they would possess.

The termless mysteries
Of knowing rest herein:
Who'd know must be.
Whence being did begin.

✪ I. A. RICHARDS, born in 1893, began writing verse after entering his seventh decade. He is Professor Emeritus, Harvard. All of his verse written before 1970 was collected and published as *Internal Colloquies*.

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Jewish Immigrant Artists

IRVING HOWE

FOR NO ONE COULD THE COURSE of Jewish immigrant dispersion have been more problematic than for those Jewish artists who began working in the East Side, or similar neighborhoods in American cities, slightly before and after 1900. The personal experiences of these young people were not very different from those of other sons and daughters growing up in Jewish families. They too came from poor and working-class homes; they too had to break a path toward an identity, or at least mode of existence, in America. But by choosing to become painters and sculptors they assumed new kinds of burdens. In a very few years they would have to turn from the insularity of their families and their neighborhoods to the strange, sometimes rather frightening world of art. For the more adventuresome among them, this often meant a journey to Paris, the site of artistic modernism—just as Soutine and Chagall, a few years later, would go from town or *shtetl* to Paris. Emerging from a culture in which the very conception of visual art was still frail, the apprentice painters and sculptors of the immigrant milieu had to make a leap across both geography and history in order to test, perhaps fulfill, their talents.

Even the least-lettered immigrant Jew had some sense of the writer as a cultural figure who was supposed to merit respect; rarely did he have a similar sense of the artist. Most Jewish immigrants, to be sure, had little direct engagement with literature or music, yet these fell within what might be called their "boundaries of respect." But the life of the painter they could rarely envisage as a career for their children; it evoked pitfalls rather than honors; it represented a leap into the gentile unknown, and about such leaps their experience advised a certain skepticism.

Maurice Sterne, as a child in a small Baltic town, showed an early interest in drawing, but soon learned that "the graphic arts had abso-

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lutely no place in our lives. Religious Jews took very seriously the Biblical injunction against 'graven' images, and I was badly punished one day by the rabbi . . . for drawing his picture on the ground with a stick." Within his family there were differences of attitude toward the boy's talent: his sister, on a visit to Moscow, took him to see the Tretiakoff Gallery, while his parents, indifferent to his "burning desire" to become an artist, sent him to a trade school. "Every moment I could, I spent in drawing and I gave very little attention to the teachers who tried to make me a locksmith." When the family came to America, in 1889, young Sterne, though still only fourteen, "put on the drab factory apron of the Jewish immigrant," and worked first as a tobacco stripper, then in a bronze factory, and later "in a flag factory on the lower West Side."

Jo Davidson, born on the East Side, would remember "strange sour smells, drab unpainted walls, and moving—we were always moving," like thousands of other families in flight from rent bills. "We were exceedingly poor and often didn't have enough to eat." To the elder Davidson it seemed outrageous that his son should dream of becoming an artist, for that meant being "a loafer, a perpetual pauper, an absolutely useless person." Nor were the Davidsons alone in holding this attitude.

Jacob Epstein's family, more prosperous, was also more sophisticated. While his parents "did not approve of all that I did, they saw that I had what might be called a special bent. My turning to sculpture was to them [nevertheless] mysterious." They did not actively discourage him, it was just that they "could not understand how I could make a living by Art." Abraham Walkowitz's mother ran a newspaper stand on Delancey Street, and as a boy he had to help sell papers in the afternoons—a life half an inch from subsistence and hardly the sort to encourage a career in art. William Gropper's father was indigent, and the family depended on his mother's dressmaking at home. "Gropper's first working experience was carrying bundles of cloth home from the lofts for his mother to sew at night. At fourteen he left P.S. 171 and began working twelve hours a day, six days a week, for $5.00 and nothing more for overtime." Arnold Friedman, fatherless at five, worked with his mother "in one of those wretched little East Side grocery stores open at all hours and giving their customers home service besides. . . . In his early teens, he became a wage earner, working at the Produce Exchange." Ben-Zion, coming to America in his late teens, worked as dishwasher and Hebrew teacher, both about equally lucrative. William Zorach and Ben Shahn were trained in their youth as lithographers, considered a rather "good" trade. The few decades between them in age made for a sharp difference

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in condition, Zorach suffering extreme poverty while Shahn could even attend college for a while.

There were some happy exceptions to this pattern of cultural incomprehension and parental hostility. The son of a poor Brooklyn tailor, Max Weber met with no resistance when he decided to become an artist; he dropped out of Boys High after a restless year and talked his way into Pratt Institute even though he lacked the formal requirements. The Soyers—Raphael, Moses, and Isaac—were luckier still. Their father was a Hebrew writer in the provincial Russian town of Borisoglebsk, but far from sharing the contempt for art of the fathers of Soutine and Chagall, Abraham Soyer encouraged his children to draw and make paper cutouts. "He adorned his own dwelling . . . with small reproductions of old masterworks, and he told [his sons] about Michelangelo, Raphael and Rembrandt." Guided by this sensitive father, himself learning to taste the pleasure of worldly culture, the Soyers had even visited a few museums before reaching America.

To become an artist, the young Jewish aspirant had to possess exceptional strength of will, a stubborn insistence that he would go his own way whether or not his family approved. The biographies of American Jewish artists share this one point of similarity: almost all of them turned to drawing and painting in their early years and then, some natural gift released, were determined to strike out in a direction barely known to their culture—quite as if they had decided to make up for those hundreds of years which separated the east European Jews from the art of the West. And most of them were fortunate in encountering teachers in America who would have felt it an utter disgrace to care about such low considerations as social origin, accent, or race. Indeed, a good many of the native American artists who taught these Jewish boys were roused to tender sympathies.

For his first instruction Jacob Epstein went to the Art Students League, as did Arnold Friedman, who agonized for three months before working up enough nerve to apply for admission. Friedman had as his teacher Robert Henri, one of "the Eight," a group of painters who briefly came together out of a common desire to break past the academicism reigning in the American art world during the early 1900s. "Warm, thoughtful, severely honest yet kind," Henri urged his students to depict, as Friedman often would, the immediacy of their surroundings. Whatever its ultimate value to twentieth-century painters, Henri's advice that they should look for beauty or poetry even in the most sordid of urban settings was clearly liberating to young men still held fast by the slums. Morris Kantor was also a student of Henri, as was William Gropper,

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who worked under him at the Ferrer School, an anarchist-sponsored institution started in 1911. Henri and George Bellows taught there without pay, coming on Sundays to inspect the work of the students and to offer them encouragement and advice. Max Weber was equally fortunate, studying at Pratt with Arthur Wesley Dow, an enlightened teacher who had spent years abroad with the Orientalist Fenollosa.

The roster of Alliance Art School alumni is notable: Ben Shahn, Saul Baizerman, Leonard Baskin, Adolf Gottlieb, Louise Nevelson, Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, Louis Schanker, others. "Many of these," notes Alfred Werner, "got additional training at institutions 'uptown,' but it was only logical for ghetto boys and girls to seek places for study first in their own neighborhood, to save time and carfare they could ill afford, and to avoid being embarrassed by their Yiddish accents, poor clothing, foreign names and manner."

All of this, when placed against the background of immigrant life, is surely astonishing. How, one wonders, did so keen an interest suddenly appear among even a small minority of immigrant Jews in painting and sculpture? Part of the answer may be that while few east European Jews had ever been able to visit museums or look at paintings and sculpture, reports had spread through the Yiddish papers and by word of mouth concerning successful Jewish artists in Russia. In its hunger to absorb Western culture, the secularized portion of the east European Jews was prepared for the idea of art before it could encounter art itself. There were already a number of famous Jewish artists in Russia during the last few decades of the nineteenth century, figures like Isaac Levitan, the landscape painter, and Mark Antokolski, the sculptor. If most *shtetl* and even urban Jews had no real idea of what such men were doing, the network of clan gossip was efficient enough for word to get around that "we" now had painters honored in Moscow and Saint Petersburg quite as "we" had writers and musicians. (The proliferation of musical prodigies is legendary.) Growing up in Vitebsk, Chagall studied with a Jewish painter named Pen; in Saint Petersburg there was a distinguished Jewish art teacher named Bakstin. These were isolated figures, but given the cultural eagerness and self-consciousness pervading the east European Jewish world, they were all the more likely to be noticed.

And there was more Jewish art in eastern Europe than is commonly supposed. By now we are familiar with decorative elements on Torah curtains, candlesticks, spice boxes, prayer shawls, Chanukah lamps, and other ritual objects; less widely known is the fact that, the second commandment notwithstanding, there was also a simple representational art in illustrated Haggadahs used for Passover services. In the

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wooden synagogues the east European Jews had developed a style of building that could have its own austere beauty—a beauty of poverty. All of this, it may be supposed, had some effect on at least a minority of immigrants, obliquely preparing them for later encounters with Western art.

Other influences made themselves felt through cultural pressures and frictions. The German Jews in America had been purchasing art for several decades, such men as the department store magnate Benjamin Altman acquiring notable collections of paintings. In sponsoring the Educational Alliance as an agency to bring the higher things of life to their east European cousins, the German Jews felt it desirable that, together with religious instruction, sewing groups, lessons in hygiene, and courses in Greek thought, there also be some art classes. And however much they might grumble, the East Side immigrants knew that what the German Jews were offering them was something they wanted.

Yet the primary source of their interest in art, as in every other area of culture, must surely be traced to the immigrant Jews themselves. Like a tightly gathered spring trembling with unused force, their life had been held in for centuries. Once settled in America and past the initial traumas, they released the energies of generations, and with those energies a hunger to taste and acquire the goods of this world: money and culture, power and spirit. It was entirely possible for an immigrant father to look balefully on his son's desire to become an artist, even to think that *shmiren* pictures was a dubious or unworthy occupation, and yet to want his children to learn about art, to go to museums, to try their hands at drawing, indeed, to take in "everything." And when the Alliance, a few blocks away, held one of its art shows displaying the work of those errant Jewish boys, this same immigrant father might venture to drop in. It didn't hurt to look.

Newcomers to the experience of art, the Jewish painters were latecomers to the world of art. The American artists from whom they had much to learn were, as it turned out, estimable but rather minor figures—that, indeed, was one of the things they had to learn from them. Writing about the more original and innovative American artists during the first years of the century—"Prendergast, Hartley, Marin, Weber, Davis, Maurer, Demuth"—the art historian Meyer Schapiro says that "none was of the stature of the great European innovators. It is not because they are imitators of the Europeans; they are unmistakable personalities, with their own savor, but their work does not seem to us as far-reaching as that of the pioneers abroad. There is no Melville or

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Whitman or James among our painters." A somewhat sharper view of these American artists is advanced by Hilton Kramer: "This first generation of painters who undertook, at the turn of the century, to cast their native experience in a radical pictorial mode of foreign origin, suffered all the well-known afflictions of provincial aspirants to cosmopolitan achievement. . . . These artists could scarcely hope for a place in the front rank of the European *avant-garde* from which they drew their inspiration."

That the American artists to whom the Jewish neophytes went for instruction were themselves minor figures became clear in the course of apprenticeship, so that the bolder among the apprentices came to feel that the only solution for their problems was to leapfrog across American art directly to Paris. They would leave behind the narrowness of the immigrant subculture, they would discard whatever frail ties they might have with American artistic conventions, they would move straight to the heart of the new. Max Weber, having saved two hundred dollars after two years of teaching at a Duluth normal school, went to Paris in 1905 at the age of twenty-five; became a friend of Matisse, Derain, Vlaminck, and Picasso; took in the Cézanne exhibition at the Salon in 1906 ("as soon as I saw Cézanne's pictures, they gripped me at once and forever"); and found in the venerable Henri Rousseau a mentor and guardian. For a boy who had grown up in the slum streets of Williamsburg, this transformation was nothing less than extraordinary. It helps explain both Weber's role as a pioneer modernist in American art, quite in advance of many native painters who were more rooted than he in native traditions, and the flitting eclecticism one remarks in his work, a quality of always assimilating and never having quite assimilated, a style of the eager, even brilliant impersonator. Following Weber a year later to Paris was Abraham Walkowitz, who studied at the Académie Julian and immersed himself in the work of Cézanne, Matisse, and Rousseau. Less striking a figure than Weber, Walkowitz now seems a painter more individual and recalcitrant. He learned from the modernist masters but held to his own manner, a somewhat shy and somber ruminativeness, with muted colors and tones in the depiction of city scenes and a stubborn return to the contours and sensuality of the human body, for a Jewish artist as "revolutionary" in its way as Weber's discipleship to the Paris school. Others followed Weber and Walkowitz to Paris, Moses Soyer, for example, arriving in the mid-twenties with the help of a scholarship from the Workmen's Circle. That seems almost like an emblem of our whole story: a Yiddish organization enables a young artist to go to Paris, thereby multiplying the risks that he will disengage

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himself from the cultural values that form its reason for existence.

Perhaps, then, because they started from "nowhere," without the blessings or burdens of an overpowering artistic tradition, some of the Jewish painters in America could speed past the earnest limits of American art and move to the center of modernism. "The introduction of modern art in this country," remarks Meyer Schapiro, "has depended largely on the foreign-born or their immediate descendants. Its point of entry was the port of New York. . . . Among the first artists to absorb the modern ideas were Max Weber, Abraham Walkowitz, Jacob Epstein, Joseph Stella, and Gaston Lachaise, all (except Epstein) foreign-born." And especially important as a center for advanced art at this time was Alfred Stieglitz's "291" gallery, in which a number of the Jewish artists first displayed their work.

Some of the Jewish painters used Jewish subjects and settings in their work from the very start, but for others, especially a modernist like Weber, it was necessary first to absorb the experiments of the Paris school and then return to Jewish themes. In 1917 there occurs a major change in Weber's work: he ceases to be a radical innovator, or disciple of the radical innovators, and begins to "paint poetic themes with a [Jewish] religious undertone. His former variety of subjects gives way to a simple range, more human and more expressive of racial character." It was as if there were now a need to resist or, more likely, slow the cultural metamorphosis that had been necessary for becoming an advanced artist at all. Whether one regards this as a retreat from the avant-garde, a return to native sources, or both, it was a strongly felt decision. At about the same time, Weber began printing some Yiddish poetry and essays in *Shriftn,* an irregular anthology put out by a group of Yiddish writers who were called *Di Yunge;* one of these poems, an incantatory celebration of New York, juxtaposed references to the Jewish East Side and "the great city of cubistic forms." In the early twenties *Shriftn* brought together, for the first time, Yiddish writers and Jewish artists, including in its pages prints, drawings, and woodcuts by Walkowitz, Weber, and others—as well as some reproductions of Boris Aronson's expressionist sets for Yiddish theater.

At least for a time, Jewish settings, symbols, and subjects played an important role in the work of the artists emerging from the immigrant milieu. Most of them would have agreed with Walkowitz that "art has nothing to do with imitation of objects, art has its own life"; but, insofar as they produced representational or semirepresentational works, they were naturally drawn to the materials they knew best and that stirred them most deeply. Walkowitz did a series of subdued cityscapes—*The*

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Park, The Lake, Bathers, Rutgers Square—in which he asserted his own tonality as an artist, at once contemplative and sensuous, through the depiction of characteristic immigrant moments. Weber painted more exotic Jewish figures—*Hasidic Dancers, The Rabbi, Talmudists, Invocation*—in a style yoking together elements of abstraction with a frenzied Jewish lyricism. Ben Shahn, even before doing his Haggadah illustrations in a manner influenced by Chagall and Rouault, did some semirealistic paintings in which Jewish iconography floats about like detached atoms: East Side scenes like *New York* and *Sound in the Mulberry Tree*. Hyman Bloom portrayed rabbinical figures and Jack Levine biblical figures, in expressionist styles that brought together romantic and gothic feelings. The Soyers painted genre pictures, sadly immigrant in atmosphere, of Jewish apartments, members of their family, unemployment offices. In the work of these and many other painters there was an abundance of Jewish materials and references, but almost nothing in the way of a common style or method.

One or two efforts were made during these years to hold the Jewish artists together as a group, perhaps a sign that they were drifting farther and farther apart. In 1915 a teacher named John Weichsel organized the People's Art Guild, which issued a manifesto in English and Yiddish declaring that "a number of Jewish painters and sculptors have decided to organize themselves into an association." Reaching a membership of three hundred, at least some of it non-Jewish, this group arranged during its two years of activity some fifty art shows, the largest one at the *Forward* building in May 1917. Walkowitz was the artist most frequently featured in these shows. The one at the *Forward* was a tremendous success, the Yiddish writer David Ignatow remembering that "the crowds who came to the opening were so great, it became necessary to call the police. . . . Our poet, Moshe Leib Halpern, who was scheduled to speak at the opening ceremony, could enter the hall only by climbing through a window."

In the mid-twenties two Yiddish-speaking painters, Benjamin Kopman and Jennings Tofel, then working in a romantic and somewhat "mystical" style, organized the Jewish Art Center on the East Side. Raphael Soyer, who came to one or two of its gatherings, has described it a little unkindly as "inbred . . . proud, touchy, self-conscious and pretentious in its Jewishness." Such groups were fated to a brief existence. When Jewish artists like Soutine, Zucker, and Blatas drew together in Paris after the First World War, they were trying to relieve their loneliness as exiles, and what they formed was a community of aspirants and *luftmenshn*. But the Jewish artists in New York were at

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home here, at least as much as they could be anywhere, and the efforts to band them together seem to have been little more than sidings along a journey they had no choice but to take.

That the East Side, or its paler equivalents, had a strong effect on the early years of the Jewish artists, we may suppose to be certain. But whether or how it affected their work itself is another question. The Jewish immigrant milieu, and behind it the world of the east European Jews, had very little to offer by way of a commanding tradition in painting and sculpture. Available traditions in the various arts devoted to synagogue ornamentation were completely insufficient for establishing a distinctive Jewish style in painting, sculpture, and architecture; they might, at best, offer iconographic or ornamental motifs. From the immigrant milieu, a young painter like Walkowitz or a sculptor like Zorach could derive an intense cultural ambition, a "burning desire" (to recall Maurice Sterne's words) for distinguishing or expressing himself; but that ambition was necessarily generalized and, with regard to the substance of his work, had little directive power. He was cast adrift, and had no choice but to hunt, improvise, impersonate, and learn from the outer world. For the young Jewish painters who began to work soon after the turn of the century, it was often the Ashcan school that provided the first major stimulus. From it they derived the persuasion that the world in which they lived, the very world they might want to abandon, formed an appropriate setting for works of art. From it they also derived a tone of social sincerity, the effort to render honestly, without false heightening or rosiness, the textures of the urban scene. And perhaps they also derived a range of coloring, somewhat subdued and moderate.

In this art, "which might be called East Side realism," writes Harold Rosenberg,

> quantities of paintings and sculptures were done by Jews of old men with beards, grandmothers sitting in front of tenements on Essex Street, people going to Synagogue, street ceremonies of dedicating a Torah. . . . If one were to judge by subject matter, this is as legitimately Jewish art as the painting of Christian subjects is Christian art. But though art may be characterized in terms of subject matter, subject matter does not characterize it as art. . . . To grasp the feeling of a work, one must look beyond its subject to the style in which it is painted. Style, not subject matter or theme, will determine whether or not paintings should be considered "Jewish" or placed in some other category.

To speak of an artistic style in terms of a defining culture is to speak of a rather lengthy process in which influences settle and cohere, traditions

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are slowly formed, and a chain of kinships and associations is gradually created. Precisely all this was absent and, indeed, impossible in the immigrant milieu. To become a painter was in a crucial sense to cut oneself off from the Jewish community, certainly to a greater extent than was true for the Jewish writers, who if they did not continue in a direct line from Yiddish literature were nonetheless influenced by it in ways they could not always know. To become an avant-garde painter meant to become an avant-garde Jew: a figure apart, perhaps torn away, undertaking a journey of dispersion more radical than that of most other Jews. Jewish subjects could be returned to, as in some instances they were—but returned to after, and perhaps only after, the Jewish artists had gone through the experience, at once alienating and liberating, of an apprenticeship as "universal" painters.

The question that has troubled many critics and a few artists—is there a distinctive contemporary Jewish art?—must, it would seem, be settled in the negative. Yet one wants not so much to argue against this judgment as to hesitate a little and equivocate a little more, since it is hard to believe that the immigrant experience did not have some significant effect on the work of the American Jewish artists. The paintings of the Soyer brothers, for example, may indeed be stylistically derived from modern French art, but anyone looking at a group of pictures by Raphael Soyer is not likely to feel about them—as one would about a group of pictures by Bonnard or Matisse—that they come out of, or evoke, a sense of pleasure at being in comfortable relation with the external world. Soyer's pictures reflect a certain heaviness of milieu, a sense of being ill at ease in the world, the immigrant's feeling of not being "at home"—and the same can perhaps be said about other immigrant Jewish painters. There is a painting by Soyer called *Dancing Class,* which shows in the foreground two rather awkward young people trying to dance while in the rear some elderly figures, obviously parents, are dozing off in their chairs. It would be idle to speak here of a Jewish style, since the formal means employed by Soyer are not distinctively "Jewish"; yet the picture communicates something about the immigrant experience through more than its declared subject. The postures of its figures are bent, a little fearful and clumsy; these immigrant postures, held through the decades, seem now to be shaping the very contours of the picture; and not to be aware of this is probably to miss something of the picture's aura.

More than subject, less than style is at stake here. One wants to speak of "aura," "tone," "posture," "inflection"—all admittedly vague and difficult terms, yet pointing to a felt reality: that the dichotomy between

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subject and style which allows for neat categorizing is not quite as definitive as those who make it would like to believe, and that there are intermediate pictorial elements, ways of drawing figures and setting in backgrounds, which touch on both subject and style and cannot readily be disposed of through either category. Some tonality of "Jewishness" may therefore inhere in Soyer's picture, just as some tonality may inhere in Walkowitz's cityscapes (perhaps more than in Weber's rabbis). This tonality manifests itself in the postures of figures, the contours of physiognomy (Weber seems to have believed there was a distinctive Jewish face), the persistence of subject and setting, and a characteristic feeling, slightly awkward and given to pathos.

Writing about Chagall's biblical drawings, Meyer Schapiro has used the term "Jewish Gothic" as a way of indicating the folkloristic and expressionistic distortions, yoking motifs from indigenous past with cosmopolitan present, which he finds in Chagall's work. The claim being suggested here is that the way a Jewish painter handles his Jewish setting may be significantly different from the way a gentile painter might approach the same setting. By contrast, a picture by Raphael Soyer depicting a Jewish family at Friday night dinner has been called "a French painting" by Harold Rosenberg, and in style it is evidently that; but there may also be some point, a gain in perception, if we think of it as a French painting with a Jewish aura such as could not come from the brush of a French painter. "A golden glow as of chicken soup," writes Rosenberg, "permeates the picture"—exactly, and that is not a French glow.

The whole problem is likely to seem more interesting to the historian of Jewish life than to the historian of modern painting. For at a certain point we may stop asking, Is there a Jewish art? and instead ask, Why do we feel inclined to trouble with the question of Jewish art at all? And we may then discover that a strong motive for asking both questions is not so much an effort to "place" certain works of art but a fear that among artists from the immigrant quarter the process of dispersion has been so terrifyingly rapid that it foreshadows a similar fate for others.

Once beyond the representational, the "Jewishness" of art by Jewish painters becomes an all but meaningless question, dissolved as it now is into the categories of the modern. At this point, writes Harold Rosenberg as a critical defender of modernism,

> the activity of Jewish artists has risen to a new level. Instead of continuing in the masquerade of conforming to the model of the American painter by acquiring the mannerisms of European art, American Jewish artists . . . began to assert their individual relation to art in an independent and personal way. Artists like

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Rothko, Newman, Gottlieb, Nevelson, Guston, Lassaw, Rivers, Steinberg and many others helped to inaugurate a genuine American art by creating as individuals. This work inspired by the will to identity has constituted a new art by Jews which, though not a Jewish art, is a profound Jewish expression. . . . To be engaged with the esthetics of self has liberated the Jew as artist by eliminating his need to ask himself whether a Jewish art exists or can exist.

Perhaps so. For these painters, in any case, the course of dispersion has been complete. Jewish by birth and sometimes commitment, they have produced an art which cannot be described in any but the universal terms of modernism. Within slightly more than half a century, the Jewish immigrant milieu had yielded some distinguished painters and sculptors, but at the stringent cost that evidence of its sensibility was to be increasingly removed from their work.

Hannah Arendt

1906–1975

Member, THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR *Editorial Board, 1962-1971*

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Amateurism

WILLIAM HALEY

Amateurism as a fact must be older than civilization. The cave paintings at Lascaux and many earlier artifacts give every sign of having been made to satisfy some urge for individual expression rather than with any object of gain. Judged on this time scale, amateurism as a concept is very modern. "Amateurism is the curse of the nineteenth century"—the first use of the word known to the compilers of the *Oxford English Dictionary*—is dated 1868. It was indeed a concept of that century. The word *amateur* in the sense of "one who cultivates anything for a pastime, as distinguished from one who prosecutes it professionally," came into being in 1803. Such a starting point for the discussion of an eminently serious subject is not pedantry. H. L. Mencken—who once told me that if he ever had the good fortune to be sentenced to life imprisonment, he would ask only that he should be allowed to have permanently in his cell the thirteen volumes of the large *Oxford English Dictionary*—rightly held that the history of words could sometimes be more revealing than the history of events.

If both the earnestness and the materialism of the nineteenth century sought to establish a distinction between activity for pleasure and activity for gain—and I believe that it was a growing awareness of professionalism that brought the hitherto little-noticed idea of amateurism to the fore—the demarcation line between them soon began to grow blurred. In some fields today it can no longer be established. In sports one admired Avery Brundage's efforts to keep the Olympic Games simon-pure; elsewhere the attempt has been abandoned altogether. Golf and lawn tennis amateurs and professionals now compete with each other on equal terms. English cricket no longer has Gentlemen or Players.

In many fields such evolution, or the lack of it, may be of interest only to the social historian. It does not affect the well-being of society as a whole. In the arts, and particularly in the art of writing, the issue of amateurism and professionalism—which in effect has become the battle to preserve amateurism—is of the greatest possible importance. It is crucial because, while money may be the readiest indicator of the distinction between amateur and professional, it is by no means the sole, or even the paramount, criterion. Remy de Gourmont, writing on Renan in the first of his *Promenades littéraires,* noted that the artist who painted for pleasure, "to obey his genius," would outlast the artist who painted for gain. He traced the reason back to the child's love of play, which he saw as an exercise in disinterested intelligence. Those who preserved this "childishness" in later years were, he held, the true artists. "Genius almost always has in it a strong element of play"—in other words an overpowering love of what it is doing. The root of the word *amateur* is in the word *love.*

No one has illustrated this more fully than Ruskin, one of the greatest amateurs of the Victorian age. Stones, leaves, twigs, mountains, buildings, paintings—through the years he brought a pure and undiluted joy to the contemplation of them all. And when he

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shocked his contemporaries by moving in middle age to sociology and political economy, it was in the same unselfish spirit. "Every principle of painting which I have stated," he wrote, "is traced to some vital or spiritual fact." This was basically true of Ruskin in whatever sphere he wrote. The tragedy of his having passed his last decade in a state of second childhood does not lessen the force of his example as an amateur, or of the truths he had uttered. If any further proof is needed that amateurism is the irresistible play of the loving spirit wherever it listeth, it can be found in the *Notebooks* of Leonardo da Vinci.

The effort at first to restrict, and eventually to obliterate, amateurism in writing has recently been seen in its crudest form in British journalism. The Labour government favors "closed shops" (firms and organizations in which every worker must belong to a trade union). Many industries are perforce ready to accept closed shops; British newspapers are not. Assurances by the National Union of Journalists that they have no such absolute restrictions in mind have been belied by the actions of their members. Some national newspapers have had to appear with blank spaces that should have been filled by reports or articles written by non-union members, some of them members of the rival Institute of Journalists. Had they not done this, the members of the National Union of Journalists would not have brought out the paper.

While the struggle has now become intense, the desire of professional journalists to exclude amateurs from contributing to the newspapers on which they work is of many years' standing. It is only the coming to power of a Labour government, after the opposition of the British trade union movement had made the continuance of a Conservative government in office impossible, and the incoming Labour cabinet's awareness that it must placate the unions, that has brought matters to a head. Whatever the ultimate outcome—and that will depend as much on practice as on legislation, and may not be clear for some years—the freedom of British editors henceforth is not likely to be as complete as it has been for a century and a half. The demands of journalists to control their paper's policy, to veto an editor's appointments to his staff if they do not approve of them, and to run the editorial department by committee are growing not only in Britain, but also in France and elsewhere in Europe.

It must be admitted that some British editors have brought part of the trouble on themselves and their fellows. In crime, in sport, in other spheres of popular interest, they have paid great sums of money to people of fame or notoriety for matter written by journalists on their own paper's staff. "Ghosting" reached unacceptable dimensions many years ago. But this is no longer the issue. Now it is the right of editors to use qualified outsiders writing under their own names. Last spring the *Times Literary Supplement* printed on its front page a letter signed by more than sixty authors, declaring the proposed Act of British Minister of Labour Michael Foot, himself a distinguished writer and an ex-Fleet Street editor, to be "one of the most serious potential threats to the liberty of expression that has arisen in this country in modern times." The gravity and weight of the protest can be measured by naming some of the letter's signatories: Professor Alfred Jules Ayer, Sir Isaiah Berlin, Lord (Kenneth) Clark, Professor Roy Fuller, William Golding, Graham Hough, Arthur Koestler, Peter Medawar, Harold Pinter, J. H. Plumb, V. S. Pritchett, J. B. Priestley, Lord (Alfred) Robbins, Sir Steven Runciman, C. P. Snow, Christopher Sykes, Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper, C. V. Wedgwood, Rebecca West, Sir Mortimer Wheeler, and Angus Wilson. In all my fifty years of journalism and broadcasting I cannot recall so impressive a protest. The *Times Literary Supplement* published a feeble reply by Mr. Foot, which was effectively scuppered by resolutions voted by the National Union of Journalists at its Cardiff conference. That the union's leaders were aware of the inadvisability of this and sought to get the resolutions reversed could not hide the fact that the restrictive urge was still there.

All this may seem to be of interest only on the European side of the Atlantic. But history shows that international influence rarely stays entirely unilateral. American ideas, American values, and some aspects of the American way of life have penetrated nations in both hemispheres. Sinclair Lewis's *It Can't Happen Here* is not an outdated warning.

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Some unexpected things have happened in the United States since he wrote that fiction. And if it can be said that none has been on the horrific scale he portrayed, or even on the level of the apprehensions we now have in Europe, it is relevant to remember the sudden mass arrests of the Opposition members to Mrs. Gandhi's government and the temporary complete censorship that blackened democracy in India this past summer. Who would have expected that?

Whether or not American readers think these fears illusory, the question of the roles of the amateur and the professional in literature and its purlieus does have relevance for writers in all the so-called free countries. It has many other aspects. Geoffrey Grigson has raised one of them. Writing to the editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*, Grigson said that, while he had signed the protest without too much misgiving, he was concerned that "another class of persons is already driving writers by gift and profession out of a realm of comment over which they used to preside and over which they have a claim to preside." He was referring to academics. He pointed out that the reviewers in the issue containing the protest had included at least sixteen dons. He saw the same tendency in the review pages of the daily and Sunday newspapers and in the "literary" output of the BBC.

So far as the BBC is concerned, I think I must take some of what Mr. Grigson would call the blame, and what I still consider the credit. When we created the Third Programme of the BBC in 1946, we had a number of related objects in mind. The first was that the BBC's postwar radio system should have three Programmes (networks)—Light, Home, and Third, at differing levels of popularity, between them covering the whole spectrum of information, education, entertainment, and the arts. It was also the intention that there should be some plan to lead listeners upward through the Programmes—the Light, say, playing the *Rosenkavalier* waltzes, the Home some days later broadcasting an act from the opera, and the Third eventually giving the complete work. I must confess this did not work out as well as I had hoped.

The Third Programme was the key to the whole idea. It created a new set of essentials. Paramount was the need to free at least one strand of British broadcasting from the tyranny of time. Up to then program making had been largely a carpenter's job: finding material of specified lengths to fit into a daily time pattern and around fixed points. To do this, even the greatest masterpieces of literature, and sometimes of music, had to suffer on the program planners' Procrustean beds. So that this should not happen in the Third Programme, I decided that it should have no fixed points. The governors of the BBC pleaded for at least one news bulletin in the program at a regular time. I withstood this, and persuaded them that the series of news bulletins in the BBC's two other transmission systems would be fully adequate. The compilers of the Third Programme were given a completely clean slate every day, and for an unlimited succession of days. If they wanted four consecutive evenings to broadcast *The Ring*, or five for *Back to Methuselah*, they could have them. Some remarkable programs were broadcast as a result, a mammoth series on *The Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians* and a history of European music among them.

In return for this freedom, those in charge of the Third Programme had to accept two responsibilities. One was to give every work they broadcast the full length of time its creator had conceived for it. The other was to ensure that every broadcast was the best that could be arranged. Anything threatening to be second-rate must wait until the resources (human and material) were available to make it first-rate. It was on this basis that for six years the Third Programme created a new dimension in radio, not only in Britain but throughout the world.

My second objective could be achieved only with this prerequisite. One of the things that had struck me most forcibly when I became first editor-in-chief, and then director-general, of the BBC was that, except for its news bulletins, no substantial proportion of the audiences for its other programs had been drawn from the classes that formed the readership of the *Manchester Guardian* and *The Times*. This was markedly true in the academic world. Oxford and Cambridge showed a general ignorance of, and a lack of interest in, the BBC's output as a whole. As the BBC then had a monopoly, that meant in broad-

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casting as a whole. It seemed to me that if the cultural range of the Third Programme was right, if its quality was high, and if the little-known but the worth-knowing, both in subjects for the spoken word and in music, could offer an alternative to the hackneyed, then the universities would listen and contribute as well.

Of course dons had broadcast in the days of Lord Reith (Lowes Dickinson had been notable among them). But their contributions had been few and spasmodic. Nothing on this scale and as a deliberate act of policy had been attempted before. The plan succeeded more quickly and far more widely than we had hoped. Its effect spilled over into the periodicals and newspapers. Faced after the war with the threatened competition of television and radio, which they greatly overrated, the only defense the publishers of these journals seemed to be able to think of was to use those broadcasters whose names had become household words. Book publishers followed suit. Academics had written for them before, but now the scale was different. The rewards open to these newcomers were many times those available in the past. Many amateurs became professionals. They remain so, to Mr. Grigson's chagrin.

Their experience in radio had, moreover, given them an advantage over their predecessors: it had made them more lucid than they would otherwise have been. Producers of BBC talks strive for lucidity far more assiduously than newspaper or publishers' subeditors do. They work with prospective speakers on the same broadcast again and again. The speakers become aware that they are no longer communicating to a specialist or selected audience, but to the public at large. It is true that oversimplification sometimes results, but more often the gain in comprehension is made without loss. Academic and other amateurs became popular writers as well as broadcasters. When Robert Oppenheimer gave the Reith Lectures on the BBC Home network (more popular than the Third Programme) in 1953, the first five broadcasts of the series, which he had written in the United States before arriving in London on the eve of the transmissions, were well-nigh incomprehensible to the majority of listeners. Only the final lecture, which he agreed to let the BBC work on with him, made any general impact. He admitted that he had not realized such alchemy was possible.

If amateurs-turned-professionals can bring such advantages, it may be asked why must we be solicitous to save the permanent amateur from extinction? Is it in the public's interest? Is it in his own? Did not Dr. Johnson assert, "None but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money"? Johnson is the richest cornucopia of common sense in the English language, but, as both Hawkins and Walpole have told us, he was in this instance speaking of himself.

Sir Walter Scott started as an amateur. It was a pity he could not have stayed one. The greater his compulsion to write for money became, the greater grew the deterioration of his work, until both life and work ended in tragedy. Was Trollope ever an amateur? Certainly not. Although he was throughout his life a highly regarded civil servant, his novels were as professionally organized and written as if they had been his sole means of subsistence. He kept his author's accounts most carefully. He was merely a two-job man.

On the other hand, Sir Henry Taylor, an even more distinguished civil servant who was contemporary with Trollope, set out to be a professional—"a literary adventurer," he termed it—and soon became an amateur. Neither his masterpiece, *The Statesman*, nor, famous as it was in his day, his failure, *Philip van Artevelde*, was anything but a mental vacation from a highly successful public career. His *London Magazine* and *Quarterly* essays soon fell away. The time came when he shunned London society because it was too literary. In all this, he showed the same sound judgment as he showed in his public life.

Was Disraeli an amateur? The answer must surely be yes. Not all the twelve handsome volumes of the Bradenham edition of his novels can persuade us that he was ever a professional. Some of them are far better than the works many professional novelists have been able to write. Some were, it is true, written for money. The negotiations that obtained him £10,000 for *Endymion*—still worth every penny of that at Victorian sterling values—are famous. But they were the works of a genius who put his mind to creating them

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only when he did not have what he considered greater and better things to do. History has agreed with him. One can be reasonably sure that if he had been merely a professional writer he would never have written his three masterpieces. *Coningsby, Sybil,* and *Endymion* could not have been conjured from an author's brain; they had first to be lived. Disraeli showed a sense of history also in making his farewell with *Endymion* rather than with any memoirs. A professional in his position would not have shown the same restraint.

It may be easy to decide that Disraeli must be placed on the amateur side of the dividing line. It is not so easy to give an exact definition of the line so that the status of every writer can be settled. Sir Thomas Browne was clearly an amateur. So was Dr. John Brown. He was a practicing medical man all his life. (It is regrettable that some collections of *Horae subsecivae* leave out the medical essays; they are among the most entertaining.) His writings came as the spirit moved him. *Vathek*'s Beckford was an amateur. What were the Brontës? Charlotte can be deemed to have become a professional; Anne and Emily, never. Yet, as C. P. Sanger showed in his fascinating pamphlet, *The Structure of Wuthering Heights,* no novel of Jane Austen's was more meticulously constructed to an actual calendar. Only two indications of a date are given in the whole of Emily's Chinese puzzle of a novel, but every incident in it can be rearranged and chronologically placed, down to a change in the English game laws. Still, this does not make Emily a professional. It merely demonstrates that even a volcanic eruption can have a pattern.

Samuel Butler (*Erewhon,* not *Hudibras*) brings the problem on to new ground. Even if one were to grant that he was a professional writer—which I am not prepared to do—he outraged the professionals by at least one amateur effort. Readers of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's *Adventures in Criticism* may recall the surprisingly severe opening to his essay "Who Wrote the *Odyssey?*" (for Q was usually a most mild-mannered and urbane man).

It may sound overweening, but I do not see how any man of ordinary common-sense can think of Samuel Butler without pity and impatience—pity that so rare a man should throughout his life have missed his market—pity again for the suffering his mistakes must have inflicted, and confessedly did inflict, upon a spirit so egotistical—impatience, as one sees him inviting his punishment time after time by his ingrained habits of touchiness and offensiveness.

One goes back to Matthew Arnold's "A Word About Spinoza" to find an opening more damning.

What was Butler's offense? He had written a book, *The Authoress of the Odyssey,* and had translated Homer to prove that the *Odyssey* had been composed by a woman. And the book had gone into a second edition! Butler's offense was not in holding so heretical a view or even, in Quiller-Couch's words, in making "not a plain translation at all, but a diabolically clever one, elastically worked to suit a theory." The uproar was caused by his effrontery in daring to challenge the academics to a stand-up fight in their own exclusive domain. In this case Butler was admittedly an amateur. So was Goethe, with his complicated theory of colors. So was Mill when he wrote on Coleridge. In these and in many other cases, the incursion of the amateur into the field of the professional was beneficial. Q himself relented toward the end of his attack, and found some attraction to Butler's theory about Trapani. Stagnant waters had been stirred. The furor was gain.

One of the most remarkable cases of a writer invading alien territory was that of Morley Roberts. Now that George Gissing is enjoying a revival, Roberts may also be resurrected. He was the most understanding of Gissing's friends; his book *The Private Life of Henry Maitland* is still the best portrayal of Gissing we have. Roberts's *Western Avernus,* the story of his American experiences as a sheepherder in Texas, a navvy in Minnesota, and a farm worker in California, is important in giving his background. He returned to England penniless. He wrote a score of novels, essays, and plays, all now forgotten. The death of his daughter and then of his wife set this strange, poverty-stricken, literary man-of-all-work brooding on medical matters. Storm Jameson, in her monograph "Morley Roberts: The Last Eminent Victorian," has told the subsequent miracle. "It was after his wife died that, to distract himself, he began

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the work, on the nature and cause of cancer, which more and more engrossed him, and drew from him three of his most remarkable books." If there could be any strictly forbidden territory for the amateur, it would surely be cancer. Had Roberts been a popular writer, and had his conclusions been wild, he could have done great harm. This was territory upon which Keep Out signs seemed not only permissible but obligatory. Roberts persisted. In 1934 five of the greatest medical authorities in Britain—the Regius Professor of Physic at Cambridge University, the Professor of Morbid Anatomy in the University of London, the Senior Surgeon of the Middlesex Hospital, the Senior Physician to Guy's Hospital, and Sir Arthur Keith, an ex-president of the British Association for the Advancement of Learning—wrote a long letter to *The Times* drawing attention to a new edition of Roberts's book, *Malignancy and Evolution,* and stressing the importance of his work from a practical point of view. Never can an amateur—in a world completely unknown to his upbringing and experience—have been more authoritatively justified.

In case it is claimed that one is guilty of special pleading, and arguing from exceptional cases, I must add that during my editorship of *The Times* we devoted a column each day to contributors who mostly had never written before. The supply was copious. Much of the quality was high. These amateur writings became one of the most appreciated features in the paper. Some of the writers had books published subsequently. I would not claim that any of these added to the sum of human knowledge, but if they did no more than give pleasure they helped to validate the principle.

In the last analysis, it is necessary to consider the survival of amateurism as a general principle. In these difficult times it is even more necessary first to relate any principle to modern conditions. The case for the amateur has to be restated because amateurism is in greater hazard than ever before. This is an age not only of specialization but also of standardization. John Gross's *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters* is both a fascinating and a melancholy book. The slippered days of authordom are gone. The adventurous days of amateurism are going. Rising costs are making the author's calling more and more regimented. The pressures on writers, printers, and publishers to reduce costs to a minimum and to avoid any possible risk of failure lead the professionals into economical and safe ways. Book prices are now so high that many new publications are beyond the purse of the ordinary reader; it is left to the universities and other libraries and institutions to buy them. Such buyers are rarely in the market for amateurism or experiment. They too play safe. Specialists are attracted to specialists. In each field of publishing, and particularly in scholarly fields, there is an undeclared but generally recognized imprimatur. License beyond this license is frowned upon. Courage, sometimes to the point of foolhardiness, is necessary if completely new ground is to be broken. Occasionally it may come from the rebel professional and be successful. It will come more often valuably from the amateur. In their own fields only geniuses among the professionals are completely exempt from logical progression. The world at large is more ready to allow the amateur his brilliant wild guesses—and leave it to the professionals to refute them if they can.

When the professional moves out to territory not his own, his hazards are even greater. The human ego has a subconscious resistance to professionals as polymaths. The greater the authority a professional has in one field, the less ready are we to surrender ourselves to him in others. Why is he on this new ground? Is he seeking to restore a fading reputation? Is he trying to make a new one? All publicity corrupts; television publicity corrupts absolutely: is he just trying to keep in the public eye? The amateur faces far fewer obstacles. He has nothing official at stake—no position to lose, no authority to maintain. His pretensions are more acceptable because they are less pretentious. We are ready to judge with a far more open mind the merits of what he has to say.

The same pressures are exerted at more popular levels. Authors tend more and more to become typed according to the kinds of books they write. Any breakaway that is a failure is a drain on small profit margins, if not an addition to losses. After a study of the authors in the next season's publishing lists,

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the predictability of what is to come is high. Since the professionals will stick to their lasts, new ground is more likely to be broken by the amateurs. Sometimes they and their publishers are rewarded by having that ground prove fertile: a number of best sellers in the past decade have been off the beaten track.

If such virtue can bring such rewards, why worry? Unfortunately, it is almost an axiom of publishing today that the higher the public benefit pursued, the greater is the hostage given to fortune. Scholarly journals, presses devoted to learning, serious publishing of all kinds cannot light-heartedly afford such risks. To the intellectual arrogance of the specialists who would keep interlopers out is added the financial attraction of safety. There is a duty to resist both conscientiously. Mankind has benefited immeasurably from the cross-fertilization of ideas. It is from amateurs, and these include specialists straying out of their own domain, that cross-fertilization comes.

Cross-fertilization is a desirable end. It cannot adequately be established as a principle. To find that, one can do no better than to fortify and extend John Stuart Mill's classic insistence on the right of the one man who is at odds with the rest of mankind to enjoy the liberty of expression accorded the rest of mankind. Mill feared his lone dissenter's being silenced by the tyranny of the political majority. That fear will never become groundless, but even if its abolition were possible, that would not free everybody. Politics and affairs and even religion are not the sum of life. There are cultural, scientific, ethical, artistic, imaginative, creative minorities also, and they too can be minorities of one. The world of writing and publishing, whether consciously or subconsciously, whether because of custom, taboos, self-interest, or for any other reason, has no right to deny them expression. The potential fullness of life is limited if they *are* denied expression.

They are bound to be amateurs to start with. If their hearts remain pure, they will stay that way. They are the leaven that the dull dough of society will always need. "In a civilized state," Gibbon wrote, "every faculty of man is expanded and exercised; and the great chain of mutual dependence connects and embraces the several members of society." The vital, renewing links in that chain will always be the amateurs.

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Baking Out

MARK PERLBERG

Old fellow, taking your ease by the hour in the sun
At the side of the clapboard house that faced the sea—
"Baking out," you called it, and you sat still in the sun
Half a day it seemed, head thrown back, eyes closed, smiling.
"My God, Harry, you're turning purple.
How can he sit so long in such a sun? Did anybody ever
see the like?" Mother was annoyed.
Such *sitzfleisch* made her angry.
"Where's Harry?"
"Where else? Baking out in the everlasting sun."
And on he sat in the summers turning dark
As the sun blazed its way across the sky.

What did he think about in the high hot sun of noon
And afternoon? I never thought to wonder—arrowing
Off on errands of my own. But I wonder now:
Did he dream in the pummeling sun?
Did he listen as I do now (eyes closed, head thrown back)
For the rustle of wind like water foaming
High in the trees across the road,
For the scrape of bayberry in a great green clump near his chair,
To the noise of kids calling, of gulls cackling, heckling, cawing?
Did this random mesh of sounds please him?
—Far from the East Side streets he knew as a boy
Far from the pummeling gangs.

"—Irish and Italians they were. They'd clobber you
if you left your territory and crossed into theirs.
(He recounted the threat with zest.)
I was short but could run like sixty.
Did I tell you the time I won a medal in track?
I was a city kid in a camp in the mountains.
I ran the hundred without track shoes. Track shoes?
Whoever heard of track shoes?"

It was the one glory exploit of his youth
I knew about. And the time, in a boys' club,

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He sang in *The Mikado.*
"On a tree by a willow . . . ," accompanying himself
With fluting whistlings.

Did the scent of weed on the beach,
The minty breath from the fields please him,
As he purpled like an Indian in the sun?
What of the sight of boats puttering, sailing, passing
On the endless lilting sea.
Of birds hunting, drifting on rivers of air?

Mostly, it was the feel of the sun, I think,
My stepfather loved,
Oiling the skin of the long dead boy,
Pouring some kind of honey.
Maybe he stored it up in his chair on the lawn
So it would glow in him all winter,
Through the fights, the arguments, the long subway rides,
The gray afternoons in the courthouse in the Bronx.

Old Harry, I hope that baking out
Was your time to dream
Long waking dreams bright as sails
In the late afternoon of your life,
Dreams you let no one enter,
As you sat on your rented lawn
By the sea and the Maine islands
In the light of the man-eating sun.

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Paul Valéry and the Universal Self

MARTIN TURNELL

Although American critics have written many important studies of French authors of every kind—which points to a general interest in French literature in the United States—the translation of Valéry's collected works in the Bollingen edition has not enjoyed anything like the popularity it deserves. The fifteen volumes not only contain all Valéry's published works, but include selections from his diaries, correspondence, and autobiographical essays, particularly in the final volume, appropriately called *Moi*. The book, admirably edited by Jackson Mathews, is the completion of a life's work on the part of a dedicated scholar who has served his chosen author splendidly. The translations are excellent, and Mr. Mathews's own translation of *Monsieur Teste* rightly won him the National Book Award for Translation in 1974. All the poems and those plays that are wholly or partly in verse are given in French and English on opposite pages. There are distinguished introductions to the various volumes that are the work of American, English, French, and Spanish scholars, including W. H. Auden, T. S. Eliot, Francis Fergusson, Joseph Frank, Salvador de Madariaga, Octave Nadal, Herbert Read, Wallace Stevens, Allen Tate, and Philip Wheelwright. Finally, there is an invaluable memoir of Valéry by Igor Stravinsky.

The volume entitled *Moi* throws much light on the influence of environment on the poet's work. "I was born," said Valéry, "in one of the places where I should like to have been born, where my first impression came from the sea and the activities of a seaport." He was born at Sète, on the French Mediterranean coast, on October 30, 1871, and was buried there after his death in Paris, July 20, 1945. The setting and the period played an important part in his achievement. Marine imagery and the splendid climate, described in *Moi* as "Mediterranean inspirations," undoubtedly contributed to the lyrical beauty of his poetry. The period is even more important. He was born in the middle of one of the most original periods, not only of French literature, but of nearly all the French arts. There was a vast extension in the range of experience, an attempt to plunge more deeply into its nature in the hope of reaching the ultimate truth about life, that was probably influenced by the general decline in religious belief in the nineteenth century. It was naturally accompanied by remarkable technical developments that became still more elaborate in the present century, which saw Valéry's great successes. In poetry, romanticism, a comparatively simple approach to life, was replaced by Symbolism, "pure poetry," "free verse," and, later, surrealism.

Strong contrasts existed as well. A particularly illuminating example is provided by Tristan Corbière, a great French poet whose "Litanie du Sommeil" is regarded as a precursor of surrealism. Yet it took nearly a century for him to be fully recognized because be deliberately rebelled against the traditional conception of the poetic; he indulged not only in slang and the oral style, but in unorthodox

MARTIN TURNELL, the well-known critic of French literature, has translated the works of Pascal, Maupassant, Paul Valéry, and Jean-Paul Sartre. Latest among his published books is *Jean Racine—Dramatist*.

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language that the French were unable to take. His eventual recognition owes a great deal to Anglo-American writers like T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, who could easily disregard the rigid canons of the French language. In some respects Corbière was the opposite of Mallarmé and Valéry. Although Valéry once said that in literature "I rarely look at anything but form and composition, the rest never seems 'serious' to me," both he and Mallarmé employed the classical alexandrine in some of their greatest poems. Poetic tradition, however, did not prevent Mallarmé from using a completely new form of versification in *Un Coup de dés,* a form for which no one has yet found a precise definition and which prompted an acute description by Valéry, who said, "He introduced a *spatial* reading which he combined with *linear* reading; it was the equivalent of enriching the literary domain with a second dimension."

In 1884, the Valéry family moved to Montpellier, where Paul completed his education at the *lycée* and the university. In 1889, he discovered the poetry of Mallarmé, Rimbaud, and Edgar Allan Poe, thanks to a reading of Huysmans's *A Rebours*—that remarkable novel which he described as "my bible, my bedside book." He himself began to write poetry at the age of eighteen, and his first poems appeared in the "little reviews" of the day. He also produced his first piece of literary criticism. The title was "Some Notes on Literary Technique," and the subject was Edgar Allan Poe, whom he admired as much as Baudelaire had before him.

In 1889, he began a year's military service as a volunteer. When it ended, he returned to Montpellier University as a full-time student and completed his baccalaureate the following year. The most important event of the year, however, was his first meeting with Stéphane Mallarmé, the writer whom for the rest of his life he regarded not merely as his mentor and best friend, but as the Master. He had written to Mallarmé the previous year, but the two did not meet until October 1891, when Valéry was in Paris.

Valéry took his degree in law the following July. A month later, while on a visit to his Italian mother's native city of Genoa, he underwent a strange experience that is usually spoken of as the "Night of Genoa." This is how he described it in a letter to his brother: "An appalling night—spent on my bed—storms everywhere—my room dazzlingly illuminated by every flash of lightning—and my whole fate at stake in my head.—I am between me and myself." This last sentence provides an important clue to the nature of his poetic experience.

The "Night of Genoa" is sometimes compared with the much more prolonged crisis that Mallarmé experienced as a young man, known as the "Nights of Tournon." A certain similarity exists between the two experiences, in that both ended in a loss of religious belief, though their immediate effects were very different. During that very painful and protracted period, Mallarmé found himself as a poet and began to formulate the theory of "the Great Work," which was to have been a final poetic testament but was never finished.

Valéry's experience resulted not only in the loss of religious belief, but in the loss of faith in himself as a poet. The story that the "Night of Genoa" inaugurated a "twenty years' silence" during which he wrote no poetry is now known to be something of an exaggeration, but he certainly abandoned poetry for a considerable time. He may have gone on writing, but it was twenty years before he actually started work on a major poem. With the exception of two short poems that appeared in 1907, he published no more verse until 1917, and in 1912 he refused the invitation of André Gide and Gaston Gallimard to have a volume of his early poems published.

Not that the time was wasted. The period is important not only because Valéry took office jobs beginning with the Chartered Company in London, then moved on to the French Ministry of War, thence to the Ministry of Marine, and finally to a post in the Havas News Agency; but because he wrote two prose works, the *Introduction to the Method of Leonardo da Vinci* and *An Evening with Monsieur Teste,* that played a major part in his discovery of the nature of his true vocation. The original versions appeared in magazines in 1895 and 1896, but Valéry expanded them considerably many years later. What deserves emphasis is that, like many of his other critical essays, they are related so directly to

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his poetry that T. S. Eliot observed, "We can almost say that Valéry's essays form a part of his poetical work." The first versions were attempts, whether he realized it or not, to discover the method used in his major poems. The additions that followed the publication of his poems are an explanation or commentary on his achievement.

Valéry put a great deal of himself into his *Leonardo* and *M. Teste.* It is common practice to emphasize that there is very little of the historical Leonardo in the *Introduction.* Yet Valéry was the first to admit that this was not a study of the real Leonardo, but was something like a guide that he used in trying to find himself. "We wish," he says at the beginning of his study, "to place a being in our likeness at the heart of a system we impose on ourselves . . . . I propose to imagine a man whose activities are so diverse that if I postulate a ruling idea behind them all, there could be none more universal." He goes on to say that he could "find none more suitable than Leonardo da Vinci," but adds, "Very little that I shall have to say of him should be applied to the man who made his name illustrious." Finally, in *Moi*: "Knowing very little about Leonardo . . . I imagined a Leonardo of my own."

The most important word to note is "universal." The real object of Valéry's major poems was to discover what he described as "the universal Self"—which points strongly toward the great changes in literature, particularly poetry, to which I referred earlier. He elaborates at once the value of the historical Leonardo and his own aims: "A host of concepts, a throng of possible memories, the power to recognize an extraordinary number of distinct things in the world at large and arrange them in a thousand fashions: this constituted Leonardo." Although Valéry showed an interest at times in all the arts—which explains what he has to say about painting and architecture in the *Introduction*—to him their real importance was their variety, their novelty, and their contribution to the "universal," which meant going deeper and more widely into personality or, as Valéry himself insisted, into "consciousness." This is reflected in his observation that "Leonardo is bound to be the despair of modern man who, from adolescence, is directed into a speciality, where it is hoped that he may excel simply because he is confined to it." It is evident that for Valéry "speciality" was the opposite, or rather the negation of, "universal."

In *An Evening with Monsieur Teste,* Valéry carried the work begun in the *Introduction* a stage further. The name "Teste" is of course an archaic form of the French word *tête.* M. Teste is another attempt to represent pure consciousness: he is "Mr. Head." In its way, this study is more elaborate than the *Introduction.* "After a good deal of thought," we are told, "I came to believe that Monsieur Teste had managed to discover the laws of the mind we know nothing of . . . . He was a man absorbed in his own variations, one who became his own system, who commits himself without reservation to the frightening discipline of the free mind, and sets his pleasure to killing his pleasures . . . by hope for the fundamental." This is a remarkably vivid account of what Valéry himself hoped to do. He enlarges on it in words attributed to M. Teste: "I am at home in MYSELF, I speak my own language, I hate extraordinary things. Only weak minds need them." What emerges from this is that M. Teste is far more a portrait of Valéry himself than Leonardo, who was simply a guide.

Igor Stravinsky, in his illuminating "Memoir of Valéry" in the third volume of the Bollingen translations, observed that "Valéry's nature *was* in some way religious, no matter how essentially non-religious his writings." This seems to support my own view that, whether Valéry himself realized it or not, the search for "the universal Self" was the result of the decline in religious belief. It means that, without any conscious anti-religious intention, Valéry was hoping to discover, or perhaps we should say to create in himself, a new form of human nature, a new Man, which would replace the conception of man that belonged to revealed religion, and to substitute for it an experience that naturally remained highly personal.

The transition from the two prose works to the poetry is not difficult to follow. *La Jeune Parque* is Valéry's greatest poem and one of the most difficult of all twentieth-century poems. He began to write it in 1913. He origi-

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nally intended it to be a short poem, but it grew to 512 lines, took four years to write, had about one hundred drafts, and was eventually published in 1917. It takes the form of a monologue by "the Young Fate," a woman who is a mythological figure like the speakers in "Narcisse parle" in the *Album de vers anciens,* "Fragments du Narcisse," and "La Pythie" in *Charmes*. The reason is clear enough. Valéry's aim was to achieve the union of the different selves in himself that would produce what he regarded as "the universal Self". The choice of the mythological figure was therefore a first move from ordinary everyday life to the poet's particular vision; it provided the method with the kind of detachment necessary to give the best view of an experience that was anything but detached from the poet himself.

It has been suggested that this poem bears the clearest affinities of any of Valéry's poems to the work of Racine. The resemblances and the differences are equally important. It is written, like Racine's tragedies, in alexandrines. The monologue of the Young Fate bears an apparent resemblance to the monologues of Racine's principal characters. This is where the difference begins. The monologues of Titus in Racine's *Bérénice*, for example, show us the hero struggling to find a way of resolving the conflict created by his love for Bérénice and the state's refusal to allow him to marry her on political grounds —or, in other words, an attempt to solve a problem that belongs to Titus's actual life. The Young Fate's monologue is very different. In spite of the change of sex and the mythological name, she is really the poet speaking to himself, or rather to the poet's divided personalities. Recall that during the "Night of Genoa" Valéry described his "whole fate at stake" and declared "I am between me and myself." "I am," said Teste, "being and seeing myself; seeing me see myself. . . ." The echo is found in the Young Fate's words, "I saw me seeing myself."

The aim is, therefore, detachment from the everyday world and the movement that will end in the emergence of the true, "the universal Self." The speaker begins as a statue. She has been asleep, but when she wakes up, she comes off the pedestal. She starts by treating herself as a young and inexperienced girl. What follows is a series of changes, or the ups and downs that we find in the conflicts of the principal characters in Racine's tragedies. We notice that when she was asleep she dreamed she had been bitten by a serpent. Although the serpent is only a dream figure, its significance is brought out when the Young Fate, on several occasions in her monologue, tells it to go away. The serpent stands for the ordinary world, which is an obstacle to arriving at the universal world. It also stands for temptation, as we can see from the various references to love—suggesting a difference between body and intelligence. I shall have more to say later about the unity of Valéry's work as a whole, but attention should be drawn here to the poem called "Ébauche d'un serpent" in *Charmes*: a monologue by the serpent describing how he brought about the fall of Eve. It is evident that the fall means a descent from the universal to the ordinary world, as we now understand things.

The Young Fate's emphasis on her youth reveals another aspect of the basic conflict. It reminds us of M. Teste's statement that "when we are children we *discover* ourselves." We must also remember that in the *Introduction,* Valéry emphasized the dangers of "specialization," which begins in adolescence and turns out to be the negation of the universal. What we find in the poem is that the Young Fate profits from what she learned in her earlier years, but is determined not to fall for a way of life that could have been associated with those early years. In other words, youth is a warning that encourages the right form of development in her.

Valéry describes the poem as a reverie "with all the raptures, all the renewal and surprises of a reverie. But at the same time a reverie in which the conscious consciousness is both the subject and the object." He underlines once again the great importance that he attached to technique: "My line had to be solid and strongly rhythmical. I knew I was tending towards a monologue as personal, but also as universal, as I could make it."

It is apparent from what has been said that *La Jeune Parque* is a dramatic poem filled with conflicts, but not conflicts between one set of human beings or one individual and others. Instead, they are completely internal

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conflicts between different selves, or the different aspects of the poet's self, in an attempt to unite them, which would lead to the realization of the positive goal. This is reflected in a letter to Pierre Louÿs in which Valéry said, "The truth is that I believe that I am *several* people." He elaborated on the point on several occasions. In his description of his last visit to Mallarmé, he said, "The consciousness of myself for itself, and the anxiety to define clearly my own existence, hardly ever left me." Or again: "I have never consulted anything but my Pure Self, by which I mean the absolute of conscience, and this is the unique and uniform operation of freeing myself automatically from all things." The goal and its problems are well summed up by a pronouncement in one of Valéry's autobiographical pieces: "My decided feeling of a profound difference between *myself and me* tends to reduce this *myself* to living a number of different lives . . . ." What this amounts to is that the monologues in the major poems are really dialogues, as I have already suggested, between "*myself and me.*"

At an early stage in *La Jeune Parque* Valéry says splendidly,

> Thing of harmony, ME, unlike a dream,
> Firm, flexible, feminine, whose silences lead
> To pure acts! . . .*

The words "harmony," "firm," "flexible," and "pure acts" clearly refer to the Young Fate's merits and therefore to the positive elements that Valéry found in himself. They will be mentioned on many occasions, but will naturally be seen to be threatened and possibly in danger:

> I can give the light no more than a stranger's look. . .
> Ah! how much may it grow in my questing night,
> That secret half of my divided heart,
> And my skill grow deeper from obscure probings! . . .*

This is a clear illustration of the search for the positive qualities and the threat to them from weaknesses. She can only give a "stranger's" look to "light," which stands for a positive quality in the world that she is seeking, owing to her "divided heart," but hopes that her "skill" in seeking light will grow deeper by taking a proper view of it. In

> Dawn unveiled to me the whole hostile day,
> Half of me was dead; and the other perhaps
> Immortal, dreaming that the future itself
> Was only a diamond completing the diadem. . . .**

she is caught, as before, between positive and negative, believing that half of her is "dead" and the other half "immortal."

Then a setback:

> Thing of mystery, ME, are you living yet!
> When the dawn's curtain lifts, you will recognise
> Your same bitter self . . .†

The shadow disappears:

> The darkness that sheds me, indestructible victim,
> Unveils me rosy to newborn desires
> On the terrible altar of my memories.††

This reveals a mixture of feelings. A happy state begins to emerge, but the speaker's

* Harmonieuse MOI, différente d'un songe, / Femme flexible et ferme aux silences suivis, / D'actes purs! . . .

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The Collected Works of Paul Valéry, ed. by Jackson Mathews, Bollingen Series XLV, vol. I, *Poems*, trans. by David Paul (copyright © 1971 by Princeton University Press); vol. 3, *Plays*, trans. by David Paul and Robert Fitzgerald (copyright © 1960 by Bollingen Foundation); vol. 4, *Dialogues*, trans. by William McCausland Stewart (copyright © 1956 by Bollingen Foundation); vol. 6, *Monsieur Teste,* trans. by Jackson Mathews (copyright © 1973 by Princeton University Press); vol. 8, *Leonardo, Poe, Mallarmé*, trans. by Malcolm Cowley and James R. Lawler (copyright © 1972 by Princeton University Press); vol. 15, *Moi*, trans. by Marthiel and Jackson Mathews (copyright © 1975 by Princeton University Press).

* Je ne rends plus au jour qu'un regard étranger . . . /Oh! combien peut grandir dans ma nuit curieuse / De mon coeur séparé la part mystérieuse, / Et de sombres essais s'approfondir mon art! . . .

**L'aube me dévoilait tout le jour ennemi. / J'étais á demi morte; et peut-être, à demi / Immortelle, rêvant que le futur lui-même / Ne fût qu'un diamant fermant le diadème. . . .

† Mystérieuse MOI, pourtant, tu vis encore! / Tu vas te reconnaître au lever de l'aurore / Amèrement la même. . .

†† L'ombre qui m'abandonne, impérissable hostie, / Me dé couvre vermeille à de nouveaux désirs, / Sur le terrible autel de tous mes souvenirs.

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"newborn desires" are haunted by something which sounds like a renewal of old temptations. This suggests that "indestructible victim" has a double meaning. She cannot escape completely from the past, but is saved from any serious downfall because of her indestructibility. The upshot is that the past and its memories need to be absorbed and converted into something new.

In view of the changing fortunes, we cannot say that the poem ends in a triumph as ordinarily understood, but the fact remains that there has been progress and the speaker has achieved something of the Self which was the target:

> Immense being invades me, the burning incense
> Of my divine heart breaches a shape without end . . .*

An explanation is provided by Valéry himself. He describes the poem as "the painting of a sequence of psychological states and, in sum, the *transformation of a consciousness* in the course of a night." The inference is that the target is "the transformation of a consciousness," but that it does not mean a peaceful and unchanging life. The changes and conflicts between feelings have to continue all the time, as they do in nearly all Valéry's long poems, reminding us of the description of Teste as a man who "commits himself without reservation to the frightening discipline of the free mind, and sets his pleasure to killing his pleasures . . . by hope for the fundamental."

What Valéry was attempting in *La Jeune Parque* was to make language do something that it had not previously done, and to make it do so in perfect freedom. One of the results is that it is impossible to explain the meaning of the poetry in detail. Valéry himself put it interestingly: "My verses," he said, "have the meaning attached to them. The one I give them suits only myself and does not contradict anyone else. It is an error contrary to the nature of poetry . . . to claim that for each poem there is a corresponding true meaning, unique and conformable to, or identical with, some thought of the author's. A result of this error is the invention of that absurd school exercise which consists in having verses put into prose. This inculcates an idea most fatal to poetry, for it teaches that it is possible to divide its essence into parts which can exist separately." Although Valéry may have achieved "the universal Self" or the new Man, it was an experience that could only be expressed in "form and composition." The result is that the most any critic can offer is a guide in more or less general terms, that in order to appreciate Valéry to the full it is not only useless but misleading to try to summarize the nature of his experience in detail and in prose. It follows that we simply have to read, reread, and reread again and again his poem, absorbing the untranslatable experience conveyed by the purest example of "pure poetry" in the most literal sense. There is no need to accept Valéry's suggestion that it is an error "to claim that for each poem there is a corresponding true meaning." The more sensitive and perceptive the reader, the nearer he will come to what must be called the "true meaning" that belongs to any major poem and that in Valéry's own case remains untranslatable because of its unusual nature.

Although it must be firmly said that *Le Cimetière marin* is Valéry's second greatest poem, it is undoubtedly the most popular and the most widely admired of all his poems. No mythological figure appears this time. The poet places himself near the cemetery at Sète, where he was eventually to be buried, and speaks for himself. As an epigraph, he uses a quotation from Pindar: "My soul, do not seek immortal life, but exhaust the realm of the possible." Pindar's pronouncement is a confirmation of Valéry's comment on *La Jeune Parque*. Immortal life, as generally conceived, would be an existence of complete peacefulness after an initial "transformation of consciousness." Although there are the usual variations in his experience, his conquest in *Le Cimetière marin* has been greater, as indeed we should expect, than in *La Jeune Parque* and some of the other earlier poems. He himself suggested as much when he said he had written "as *personal*, yet as *universal* a monologue as I could compose" (italics mine).

In this poem the alexandrine has been abandoned; it consists of twenty-four six-line verses in decasyllables. The extraordinary

* L'être immense me gagne, et de mon coeur divin / L'encens qui brûle expire une forme sans fin . . .

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lyrical charm is evident in the opening lines, in which Valéry draws on the image of the sea:

> Quiet that roof, where the doves are walking,
> Quivers between the pines, between the tombs;
> Justicier Noon out there compounds with fires
> The sea, the sea perpetually renewed!
> Ah, what a recompense, after a thought,
> A prolonged gazing on the calm of the gods!*

The sun, with the emphasis on midday, and "the sea perpetually renewed" seem to stand both for the positive vitality of the universe in which he finds himself and for the growth of positive feelings inside him. It is confirmed in the sixth verse in which he writes: "Clear heaven, true heaven, look at me, I change!"** The triumphant "I change!" shows that the Self is, as it must always be, active and energetic, and is moving in the right direction.

In the first verse there is a reference to "tombs." It is by no means the only one. The epigraph shows that "immortality" is excluded for Valéry. The contrasts in the poem are therefore between the dead lying peacefully in their graves and the vigor of the man seeking the Self:

> The dead concealed lie easy in this earth
> That keeps them warm, drying their mystery.†

Clearly this is the opposite of what happens to the speaker. For the ending of the poem seems nearer to a triumph for him than anything the Young Fate experienced:

> A coolness, exhalation of the sea,
> Gives me my soul back! . . .††

This does not mean that it is a facile triumph bringing his efforts to an end, as we can see from the first line of the final verse: "The wind is rising! . . . We must try to live!"‡

The poem is a particularly good illustration of what I have called the setting of Valéry's poetry. We can see how effectively the landscape is related to the poet's state of mind in the references to "the sea perpetually renewed," "clear heaven, true heaven," "A coolness, exhalation of the sea," and, finally, "The wind is rising."

Le Cimetière marin was first published in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* in 1920, then by itself in book form the same year, and was added to *Charmes* in 1922. *Charmes* is a small collection of Valéry's shorter poems (with the exception of those compared to *La Jeune Parque* and *Le Cimetière marin*). They confirm one's view of the *Cimetière*. The poet seems nearer to his goal, producing an admirable collection of his most lyrical poems.

Valéry is one of the greatest European poets of the present century, and the surprising thing is that poetry accounts for apparently no more than 15 percent of his published literary works. All his life he was inclined to speak disparagingly of writing and once declared, in reply to a newspaper inquiry, that he himself wrote only "out of weakness."

Although this sounds like turning, or pretending to turn, a blind eye to the fact that writing is a vocation, it may well have been his reason for giving up poetry (except for "occasional poems") after the publication of *Charmes*. Yet it was, naturally, very far from putting an end to his career as a writer. His poetry had made him the most famous living French writer. He was elected to the French Academy in 1925 as the successor to Anatole France. He received innumerable invitations to write and lecture; and as his employment at the Havas News Agency had come to an end, owing to the owner's death, he had to respond. The result was extremely rich and varied: a vast assortment of critical essays on poetry and poetic theory, studies of individual writers not by any means confined to poets, the well-known reflections on the contemporary situation in the volume of the Bollingen translation called *History and Politics*, and, on the creative side, the *Dialogues* and the *Plays*. His fame was such that in 1930 he was made president of the League of Nations for Intellectual Co-operation, and in 1937 a

* Ce toit tranquille, où marchent des colombes, / Entre le pins palpite, entre les tombes; / Midi le juste y compose de feux / La mer, la mer, toujours recommencéc! / ô récompense après une pensée / Qu'un long regard sur le calme des dieux!

** Beau ciel, vrai ciel, regarde-moi qui change!

† Les morts cachés sont bien dans cette terre / Qui les réchauffe et sèche leur mystère.

†† Une fraîcheur, de la mer exhalée, / Me rend mon âme . . .

‡ Le vent se lève! . . . Il faut tenter de vivre!

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chair of poetry was created for him at the Collège de France, where he continued to lecture until a year before his death.

The most striking thing about all these varied writings, as already suggested, is their unity—in one way or another they all cast light on Valéry's great achievements as a poet. The dialogues *Dance and the Soul* and *Eupalinos, or the Architect* throw light on the technical side of poetry, which is apparent in the emphasis placed on dancing and architecture. In *Dance and the Soul* Valéry's Socrates is made to say, "Is not the great Dance, O my friends, that deliverance of our body entirely possessed by the spirit of falsehood, and of music which is falsehood, and drunk with the denial of null reality?" References appear that are evidently personal. A page or two later, Eryximachus is made to say of Athikte's dance that it is "truly to penetrate into another world," which was of course Valéry's ambition in his poetry. Still more personal references crop up in *Eupalinos*. The soul of the now dead Socrates says: "I told you that I was born *several* and that I died *one*"—clearly yet another reference to Valéry's pronouncement about being "*several* people" in the letter to Louÿs. It is followed by Socrates' "What soul would not hesitate to turn the universe upside down in order to be a little more itself"—which sounds like a reference to both *La Jeune Parque* and *Le Cimetière marin*.

In the five plays that, in spite of his description of himself as a "non-dramatist," he wrote between 1932 and 1941, Valéry went back to verse: four of them are written either in verse or a mixture of verse and prose. Arthur Honegger produced the music for the three "lyric plays": *Amphion, Sémiramis,* and *The Narcissus Cantata*. In Valéry's preface to *Amphion,* we find another reference to architecture and are told that "it occupied a large place among the first loves of my mind. My adolescent imagination dwelled passionately on the act of construction. . . ," reminding us of his reference to the need for his line to be "solid and strongly rhythmical." *Sémiramis* is a story of "wars between ancient people," but Valéry tells us that they "may be regarded as illustrating the thought that all great conflicts are conflicts of belief." In spite of the different setting and style, the play clearly looks back to the poem called "Air de Sémiramis" in *Album de vers anciens*. Most interesting of all, however, is the relation of *The Narcissus Cantata* to the two poems called "Narcisse parle" and "Fragments du Narcisse." From the two poems it is evident that Valéry gives a new personal meaning to Narcissus's passion for gazing at his reflection in the water—another attempt to unite what Valéry regarded as his different selves in order to achieve "the universal Self." In "Fragments du Narcisse," Narcissus addresses himself (meaning his reflection in the water) in a way that clearly identifies him with the poet:

> There burns a secret kiss that maddens . . .
> But I, loved Narcissus, my only quest
> Is for my own sole essence.*

Or again:

> *I love, I love.* And who can love any other
> Than Himself? . . .†

The poems are monologues, and Narcissus simply refers to the nymphs, who stand for love, as a temptation that would confine him to the ordinary world from which he is trying to escape. In *The Narcissus Cantata,* the nymphs naturally become members of the cast. Narcissus looks on them kindly, but ends by running away from them because he regards them as a threat to his personal ambition.

Valéry's last creative works were two plays in which he gives his own picture of Faust and in which the presence of the Devil prompted Igor Stravinsky to say that whatever Valéry's lack of religious belief, it is "the Devil of the Scriptures and no mere personified idea." *My Faust,* as he called the first of the two plays, is unfinished because for some unknown reason the fifth act was never written—which did not prevent Valéry from publishing it in a limited edition in 1941. The play is written in prose, but *The Only One, or the Curses of the Cosmos,* a shorter play about Faust that Valéry described as a "dramatic fairy tale," is a mixture of verse and prose. The most significant event in it is Faust's

* Brûle un secret baiser qui la rend furieuse . . . / Mais moi, Narcisse aimé, je ne suis curieux / Que de ma seule essence.

† *J'aime . . . J'aime!* . . . Et qui donc peut aimer autre chose / Que soi-même? . . .

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unsuccessful attempt to get to the top of a mountain, which means that in Valéry's conception Faust could never have become a "universal Self" because of his relations with the Devil. The verse, or rather the choice of verse, is an interesting mixture, varying from alexandrines and blank verse to something like free verse—lengths to which Valéry had never gone before.

While virtually everything Valéry wrote is highly illuminating, his great reputation naturally rests on his poetry. Although works like the *Dialogues* and the *Plays* do not possess the same fascination as the poems, they are important both in themselves and because they contribute to the remarkable unity of his work as a whole. His is a body of work of the first rank, and belongs in the same class with that of T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Paul Claudel, Rainer Maria Rilke, and García Lorca.

At the End of the Day

JOHN HOLLANDER

The mere green of the conifers:
Against it the jubilantly
Dying leaves of late October
Cried out as against steadfastness;

The evening red in which we were
Dissolved was absorbed with itself
And hardly shone at all beyond
The dark windows of Finisterre;

Underfoot lay the mudded brown,
The color of the fallen thrush,
Of silence come, waiting to make
Dark of these wild hues and their cries.

JOHN HOLLANDER's many books include *Tales Told of the Fathers* and *Vision and Resonance: Two Senses of Poetic Form.*

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The First Japanese Translations of European Literature

DONALD KEENE

The Japanese began to translate almost as soon as they were able to record their language in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., using characters borrowed from China. The influence of Chinese literature is apparent, not only in professed translations, but in countless expressions derived directly from Chinese examples. Metaphors and similes, at first translated, were quickly naturalized, and borrowings from whatever was new in Chinese poetry remained a source of inspiration to the Japanese over the centuries. Even a collection of seemingly "pure" Japanese poetry was apt to be graced with a preface in Chinese, and the influence of Chinese poetry and theories of poetical practice was sometimes so strong that what appears to be an impeccably Japanese verse may be no more than an unusually successful adaptation of lines from a Chinese poet.

The early translator generally adopted one of two courses when rendering Chinese into Japanese. Most often he merely rearranged the Chinese words in the order of normal Japanese syntax, supplying verb endings, case particles, and other features of Japanese grammar but in no way altering the nouns and verbs, even if this made for obscure expression. That method of translation is still practiced. It is popular with readers who feel that it enables them to come close to the original Chinese texts, even if they do not understand precisely what is meant. A freer style of translation, however, was also practiced, one that avoided loan-words and even substituted Japanese equivalents for Chinese persons and places in an attempt to naturalize them completely. True translations from the Chinese date back only to the seventeenth century, when stories written in both classical and colloquial Chinese were effectively rendered line-for-line into Japanese.

During all the time that the Japanese were deriving inspiration from Chinese literature and history, it seems never to have occurred to the Chinese that they might do the same with Japanese writings. True, a few works of Confucian philosophy written in classical Chinese by Japanese scholars were read and praised by Chinese Confucianists, to the boundless delight of the authors; but apart from some songs and the outlines of a few popular stories, the Chinese apparently translated nothing from the Japanese. Not only were the Chinese merchants in Nagasaki too busy to learn literary Japanese, but Chinese scholars in general were convinced that they could learn nothing from the barbarian Japanese. Unlike the Romans, who made it their policy to bring back new products from the regions they conquered, the Chinese, although they certainly profited by their conquests to acquire rare birds and beasts, always conceived of their mission as extending civilization to the benighted rather than enriching their own civilization. Thus, Japanese literature was virtually ignored by the Chinese until the twentieth century.

The handful of European missionaries in Japan at the end of the sixteenth century evinced far greater interest in Japanese literature than had all the Chinese visitors of the preceding millennium put together. Even

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though their prejudices against works of the Buddhist tradition or of amorous content kept these missionaries from exploring many masterpieces, they made translations of poetry and published editions of Japanese classics as textbooks for priests studying Japanese. With the aid of converts, they also prepared translations into Japanese of theological and secular works. The translation of Aesop's fables was one of the few works of European literature known to the Japanese before the Meiji Restoration of 1868. The translation is free, substituting for European animals and objects unfamiliar to the Japanese the nearest equivalents, but it is definitely a translation and not an adaptation. Other European works, perhaps orally introduced, were known in the form of folk tales. The adventures of Ulysses apparently inspired the Japanese stories of the hero Yuriwaka, whose name begins with a Japanese approximation of "Uly."

Translations of nonliterary European writings began at the end of the eighteenth century, when a few scholars learned enough Dutch to make their way through textbooks of medicine, astronomy, geography, and history. (The Dutch in Nagasaki were the only Europeans allowed to maintain an outpost in Japan at that time.) An office of translation was established by the Japanese government in the nineteenth century, and by the time of Commodore Perry's arrival in 1853 a fair number of scholars could translate technical works not only from Dutch but from English, French, Russian, and other languages. It did not occur to these men to look into works of literature. Their purpose in learning Western languages was to acquire useful information, not to enjoy belles-lettres. In any case, they could not have derived much pleasure from literary works written in a foreign language which they could barely decipher. It was relatively easy to learn enough Dutch to read a book of astronomy, but the intricacies of nineteenth-century Dutch literary style were far beyond their capacities.

A few curiosities of literary translation survive from the eighteenth century. In 1779, for example, the Shogun ordered a Dutch scholar to translate the inscriptions on a series of European engravings with which he had been presented. The man discovered to his dismay that the texts were in Latin, but he bravely struggled on with the aid of an old Latin-Japanese dictionary. He eventually produced a translation into classical Chinese, identifying that language with the superior dignity of Latin.

The Japanese interpreters in Nagasaki, especially during the nineteenth century, when the knowledge of Dutch improved markedly, often learned a little Dutch poetry, but they made almost no translations. One translation they did make was the offshoot of an elaborate birthday present. In 1804, the grandmother of the youthful daimyo of Sendai celebrated her sixtieth birthday, and the samurai of the fief, in order to show their appreciation for the guidance she had given the daimyo during his minority, presented her with a volume of congratulatory verses. They were anxious to secure one in Dutch, and ordered it through a scholar who had studied in Nagasaki. A poem was obtained from a visiting Dutchman, and three different translations were made into Japanese, together with one each into classical and colloquial Chinese. The poem begins:

O Zuil van den weesstand, ons waardigste toeverlaat!
Daalde van den Hemel en woont op Heilig tooren . . .

O Pillar of Orphandom, our most worthy support!
Descended from Heaven, she has dwelt in a Holy Tower . . .

Even a Japanese translation four times the length of the original poem was unable to encompass the expression "pillar of orphandom," though it explained that "descended from heaven" meant that the lady was born at the court in Kyoto and went to live in Sendai, a city whose name meant literally "holy tower." The problems that would face the translators of European poetry at the end of the nineteenth century were already apparent from this first encounter, and the solution chosen by the translators—to render only such sentiments as could be expressed in normal Japanese—would be adopted by most of their successors. Only after the Japanese language itself had changed, thanks to the accumulation of translated materials, could greater fidelity be attained in verse translation.

The first translation of a European novel was *Record of Wanderings*, written by "the

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Englishman Robinson Crusoe." The circumstances of this translation, made in 1850, are obscure—no doubt it was based on a Dutch version—but we cannot but be struck by the peculiar aptness of *Robinson Crusoe* as the first Western novel to be translated by the Japanese, even then about to venture forth into an unknown new world.

The translations of European literature, whether of poetry or prose, led toward the creation of a new Japanese literature. The old traditions were moribund, largely as the result of Japan's isolation from the rest of the world for almost 250 years, and could not be revived by the injection of current gossip. But, initially at least, no crying need was felt for European literature. The young men sent abroad by the government learned about guns, ships, and sometimes politics, in the hope of strengthening Japan in the face of the menace of the West. Few of them thought of investigating poetry or the novel.

Translations of nonliterary works began to appear soon after the Meiji Restoration, which opened Japan to Western influences. The most famous was that of *Self-Help* by Samuel Smiles, published in 1870. The Japanese title, *Success Stories of the West*, undoubtedly attracted readers eager to learn how the Europeans had come to be more "enlightened" than themselves. They were inspired by the accounts of how boys born in poverty had managed by diligence and mother wit to become rich and famous. This kind of writing was not unknown in Japan, but "self-help" was exactly in keeping with the new spirit of ambition that swept the country. The word "ambition" had formerly been used with overtones of sinister plotting, an offense that heaven was likely to punish, but William S. Clark, an American educator, was immortalized for having urged his students in 1876, "Boys, be ambitious!"

Translations of the Bible began to appear in 1873, the work of missionaries and converts. The prohibition of Christianity, instituted early in the seventeenth century, had continued in force even after Japan was opened to the outside world, despite the strong objections of the Western governments. Signposts urging informers to denounce Christians were not removed until 1873. Even then the Japanese government was far from advocating tolerance; it explained that the signposts were no longer necessary because everyone was familiar with the edicts. All the same, persecution stopped, and the missionaries began to publish translations of the Bible. As early as 1868, the divine office had been published by the celebrated Bishop Petitjean in a Japanese translation that included words like *santa* (saint), *birujin* (virgin), and *garasa* (grace) because the Japanese equivalents did not seem satisfactory.

The most important influence of the early religious translations came from Protestant hymns. In 1874 the first volumes of translated hymns appeared and were followed by many others. Sometimes this involved fitting into existing English tunes words that in no way approximated the English originals in length or sound, but eventually a distinctive rhythm for hymn translation was established which was to find favor with the Japanese symbolist poets in the early 1900s.

A similar influence on modern Japanese poetry was exerted by the translation of European songs, for use in the schools. The government laid great emphasis on universal elementary education: by 1875 more than 24,000 elementary schools were functioning, and singing was a regular part of the curriculum. In 1881, the first collection of songs for elementary schools was published. Most were European tunes to which Japanese words were sung and which became so completely naturalized that today countless Japanese sing "The Light of the Fireflies" without any realization that the tune is that of "Auld Lang Syne." The songs appealed to Japanese not only because of the pleasing melodies but because they used familiar Japanese imagery. Here is the Japanese version of "The Last Rose of Summer," translated back into English:

> The thousand grasses of the garden,
> The cries of insects too,
> Have grown sparse and forlorn:
> Ah, the white chrysanthemum,
> Ah, the white chrysanthemum,
> Alone, after the others have gone,
> Has burst into bloom.

The rose, a flower without poetic significance for the Japanese of 1880, was transformed into a white chrysanthemum, and in place of Moore's "All her lovely companions / Are

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faded and gone"—a use of personification uncommon in Japanese—the song describes the "thousand grasses" and "cries of insects" in the garden.

The length of the lines in these songs depended on the tune, but generally took the form of four-line stanzas, each consisting of seven syllables followed by five syllables, then repeated. This form, surprisingly close to the popular Japanese songs of the late twelfth century, represented the combination of the best of East and West which was constantly being urged on the Japanese by their leaders. The old traditions were by no means unceremoniously discarded (as is sometimes stated); rather, they were clung to tenaciously, even amidst the great changes brought about by the widespread introduction of Western literature and music.

The translations of European prose and poetry in this early period followed rather different paths, and I have chosen therefore to discuss them separately.

Prose. The translation of European fiction is often said to have begun with Bulwer-Lytton's novel *Ernest Maltravers,* published in 1879 under the title *A Spring Tale of Blossoms and Willows.* The importance of this translation justifies its place of honor in the Age of Translation although it was preceded, as we have seen, by Aesop's fables and *Robinson Crusoe.* Various other miscellaneous works of no great literary distinction had also appeared before 1879—apparently the books from which the translators had learned their English or French. In 1874, for example, a French story describing the adventures of a fifteenth-century brother and sister shipwrecked in Africa and impressed into slavery was published under the title *A Strange Tale of Partings,* but the original work has not been identified. The translator expressed in the preface his hopes that by introducing the West, in a manner easily intelligible even to women and children, he might painlessly instruct his countrymen. He studded the translation with references to Japanese history and customs in order to drive home the fact, say, that filial piety is a common human sentiment, or that Japanese usages of which he disapproved resembled those of African savages. This use of Western culture as a mirror in which the Japanese could discern their own good and bad points was to inspire many early translations.

The choice of other works, even when identifiable, is baffling. Why, for example, was *Albinia: or, the Young Mother,* published in Baltimore in 1833, preferred to any of the masterpieces of English literature? Perhaps it was the favorite book of the landlady who ran the lodgings where a young Japanese student was learning English; but conceivably the translator thought that this book, better than any other he knew, portrayed the emotional life of the Europeans in a way intelligible to Japanese. This was certainly true of *Ernest Maltravers.* The story, though out of date and sometimes comically inept in our eyes, moved the Japanese of the 1880s because it revealed to them that the enlightened and always rational Europeans were no less susceptible than themselves to the joys and anguish of love. The preface, by a noted scholar of the day, stated:

> Wherever one goes on the face of the globe one finds a world of the emotions. Hidebound scholars have asserted that the peoples of the countries of the West constantly consider practical benefits and preach the importance of profits, and that they never speak of poetry or romance. This is a totally erroneous view. I can say on the basis of personal observations, made during a year's travels abroad, that there is not a particle of difference in the manners that they and we exchange pledges of love. . . . Old-fashioned scholars are likely to declare, moreover, "What possible use does a love story serve? It can only be an instrument for arousing lewd thoughts and acts of impropriety." Ah, we creatures of the emotions are born into a world of emotions, and that is why we read love stories. This is something we all owe the Creator.

The discovery that the Europeans had human failings—the justification for translating the title of this book as *A Spring Tale of Blossoms and Willows* (blossoms and willows suggesting to the Japanese the world of fleshly pleasures)—may seem so obvious as hardly to require proof, but the success of this translation surely owed much to the satisfaction the Japanese felt at being able to identify themselves with an Englishman in his tenderer moments as well as in his pursuit of lofty ambitions.

The translator of *Ernest Maltravers* was at pains to point out the differences between the

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hero of this novel and those of Japanese romances of the past century. Unlike the passive heroes of Japan who accept the love (and the money) of various women but do nothing to earn our respect, Maltravers dallies with young ladies, as universal human emotions compel him, but never to the detriment of his career. He is elected a member of Parliament, travels abroad in the service of his country, and finally marries his first love, the girl who saved him from death many years before. Maltravers must indeed have seemed a far worthier model for samurai readers to emulate than did the languid young men of Japanese fiction, and the translator was at pains to demonstrate that fiction could fulfill a serious purpose in elucidating the customs, political ideals, and emotional life of an advanced, enlightened people. He also felt obliged to supply many notes for the benefit of Japanese readers, ranging from the identification of *Alice* as a female name to a brief description of what an Englishman meant when he spoke of God. His knowledge of English, thanks to a prolonged residence in England and Scotland, made him more or less equal to translating Bulwer-Lytton's turgid prose, though at one point a note on the word *ergo* explained that it was the name of a character in a play by Shakespeare!

Other translators, especially those who flourished after 1880, were motivated chiefly by political ideals. The readers they aimed at were mature men of the educated classes whom they wished to persuade by presenting the political doctrines found in Western novels. One man began in 1881 to publish serially in the organ of the *Jiyūtō* (Freedom Party) a translation of *Mémoires d'un médecin* by Alexandre Dumas. He translated only a small part of this long novel, and his version was not only free, but totally altered the intent of the original. Dumas described the charlatan known as Cagliostro and his unscrupulous adventures, but his Japanese translator transformed this shady character into the incarnation of the principles of freedom and popular rights, the rallying cry of the party with which he was associated. Casual mentions in the original of, say, Rousseau's *Contrat Social* were vastly expanded by the translator into illustrations of the truth of his own beliefs. Other translations of political novels included several by Disraeli (*Coningsby* appeared in 1884 under the title *The Warbling of Spring Nightingales*), and one from the French of Paul Vernier called *La Chasse aux nihilistes,* translated in the hope that it would serve as a warning against the dangers of Russian anarchism. The translation of *Julius Caesar* in 1884 may also have been inspired by political rather than literary motives, as the Japanese title suggests: *The Sword of Freedom: A Final Thrust of the Point.*

Among the other works of European literature translated between 1868 and 1885 were selections from the *Arabian Nights* (1874); *Télémaque* by Fénelon, a work that still stirred Japanese readers with its liberal political views though it was written in 1699; *Pilgrim's Progress* (1879); *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1880) in a poetic translation entitled *Spring Breezes Love Story;* and a version of Lamb's retelling of *The Merchant of Venice* (1883). The choice of works seems chaotic; in general, however, they had been picked by their translators because of romantic, political, or religious themes. The translator of *The Bride of Lammermoor* wrote:

> This story is based on the principle of cause and effect, and treats in a touching and delightful manner the delicate shadings of human feelings and the distinctions in social usages. It is a most enjoyable work that describes such matters enchantingly. Moreover, the style of the writing resembles that of romances popular in our own country. People who peruse this book will consequently discover that even in countries far across the seas, where national differences of a thousand varieties exist, there is no difference in the depth of feelings, and that their novels, reflecting this truth, are the same in purpose as our own.

The same translator, Tsubouchi Shōyō, reinforced these remarks in the preface to his translation of Bulwer-Lytton's novel *Rienzi, the Last of the Roman Tribunes,* published in 1885. Although it might have been expected that the translator would exploit the political background of this novel, at a time when the movement to secure popular rights was at its height, he was interested in *Rienzi* solely for its literary values. He declared:

> A novel is a work of art and nothing else than a variant form of poetry. For this reason, the core of a novel must be human feelings and social conditions. . . . A true novelist's skill consists in portray-

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ing vividly the state of the seven emotions, observing fully and completely human feelings, leaving nothing out, and in making imaginary characters behave in an imaginary world so convincingly that they seem like real people.

Tsubouchi's insistence on an accurate depiction of the emotions in all their depth and complexity caused him to look unfavorably on the traditional Japanese novels that sacrificed verisimilitude in order to preach "the encouragement of virtue and the chastisement of vice" or any other nonliterary principle. Of course, he admitted, some Western novels had a didactic intent, but they never subordinated their portrayal of human feelings to their thesis. Tsubouchi's observations—written as he was completing *The Essence of the Novel,* a critical work often credited with giving rise to a specifically modern Japanese literature—show how closely his literary theories were bound up with his work as a translator.

Poetry. Western poetry began to receive attention from young Japanese scholars at about the same time that the novels were first being translated. The pioneer collection, *Selection of Poems in the New Style* (1882), consisted of nineteen poems, fourteen translated from English (including Longfellow's "Psalm of Life," Gray's "An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," and Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade"), and five original poems by the translators in the general style of the foreign poetry. The three translators were all familiar with English, thanks to residence abroad, but two were philosophers and the third a botanist. None of them could be said to possess qualifications as a poet, but this failing did not inhibit either their translations or their own versifying. They were all junior professors at Tokyo University when they happened to discover a common interest in translating European poetry. They had come to the conclusion that poetry must be of its own time and place, and for this reason rejected the traditional forms of Japanese verse, which followed a poetic diction that had not changed in a thousand years and was deemed incapable of describing man's deepest concerns in a new age.

These translators of European poetry had learned, first of all, that the best poets wrote in everyday language, rather than in a special poetic diction. This discovery, coming some eighty-five years after Wordsworth's celebrated declaration in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads,* was revolutionary in Japan. The translator of Gray's "Elegy" pointed out that despite the great variety in European poetic forms—some poems were rhymed, some in blank verse, some long, others exceedingly short—they were all written in the colloquial language. "They never borrow words from foreign countries, nor do they pad their language with archaisms in use a thousand years earlier. As a result anyone, even a small child, can understand poetry, providing he is familiar with the language of the country."

The insistence on modern language and on a sincere statement of what is in the poet's own heart—as opposed to making up variations on hackneyed themes in the obsolete poetic language of the past—was not the only lesson learned from the translations of European poetry. The subject matter covered in *Selection of Poems in the New Style* revealed to the Japanese how much of human experience had never been treated in their own poetry. "The Charge of the Light Brigade" would inspire a whole flood of war poems during the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95. Translated extracts from the plays of Shakespeare, also included in the collection, suggested a new kind of Japanese dramatic poetry. Almost every one of the fourteen translations in *Selection of Poems in the New Style* stimulated the Japanese imagination, if only by demonstrating how themes could be developed with greater amplitude than the old forms, with their thirty-one or seventeen syllables, had permitted.

In their enthusiasm over the wide horizons opening before them, some Japanese poets concluded that *any* subject might legitimately be treated in verse. Toyama Masakazu, one of the three original translators, wrote a long poem entitled "On the Principles of Sociology," which included this statement of the theory of evolution:

The characteristics the parents possess
Are transmitted by heredity to the children;
The fit go on flourishing,
The unfit perish.
In the present world all that exists:
Bellflowers, pampas grass, the wild valerian,
Plum blossoms and cherry blossoms, clover and peonies,
And, associated with peonies, the Chinese lion-dog,

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And butterflies that alight on the rapeflower leaves,
Song thrushes that warble among the trees,
Robins that hunt for food by the gate,
Cuckoos that tell their name amidst the clouds,
Plovers that call their friends and kind,
Deer who, longing for their friends, cry
In the deep mountains, trampling the maple leaves,
Sheep and oxen who, not knowing the reason,
Plod ahead, driven by the sound of a horn,
And monkeys too, close to the sheep—
How stupid they are!—and even man,
Called the soul of all creation,
His present body and his talents too,
If traced back to their source have all
Little by little, with each generation,
Improved, and are the result
Of a steady accumulation.
With an acuteness of vision
Unmatched through all history,
The ones who determined this was so
Were Aristotle, Newton and one
Neither better nor worse than they in ability,
Mr. Darwin, whose discovery it was,
And, no inferior to him, Spencer,
Who developed the same principles.

The theories of Darwin and Herbert Spencer, even when cast into regularly alternating phrases of seven and five syllables, do not make poetic reading. This is a bad poem, not only because the principles of sociology are more effectively expressed in prose, but because the conventional prettiness of detail—mention of the flowers and animals celebrated in the traditional poetry—contrasts so peculiarly with the theme. Evolution is no longer a controversial issue in Japan, and such poems are hardly read today except as survivals of the stone age of modern Japanese poetry; but the mistakes of such pioneers, as much as their small successes, were to teach later generations of poets.

The poems in *Selection of Poems in the New Style* have been described by a recent critic as being "no more than an accidental accumulation of incompetent pieces absolutely undeserving of being discussed in terms of the artistic value of the contents." The compilers also had apprehensions about the reception their book would be accorded. One of them wrote in the preface: "Even if our poems win no favor among people today, it may be that future generations of modern Japanese poets will attain the heights of Homer or Shakespeare. Some great poet, impressed by the new style of this collection, may display greater ingenuity than we, and write poetry that will touch men's hearts and make the very gods and demons weep."

The collection certainly did inspire ridicule, but despite its clumsiness something of the power of genuine emotions expressed in straightforward language was communicated to the reading public. The book sold well, and innumerable young poets were intoxicated by the possibilities of expression that had been revealed to them for the first time.

The beginnings of modern Japanese poetry and prose were intimately connected with the translations made before 1885. They were crude and not always representative of the best in European literature, but they provided the next generation with new forms and techniques, and with the possibility of expressing themselves as members of a new, enlightened era. Their efforts, whether in translation or in imitation of Western models, often make us smile today, but these translators were deadly earnest, and even their worst failures as works of art sometimes have the power to move us. As Shimazaki Tōson, who emerged as the first important poet of modern Japan, later wrote:

A new era in poetry had at last arrived. It was like the coming of a beautiful dawn. Some poets shouted their words like the prophets of old, others cried their thoughts like the poets of the West; all seemed intoxicated with the light, their new voices, and a sense of fantasy. Youthful imagination awoke from an age-old sleep and clad itself in the language of the common people. Traditions took on fresh colors again. A brilliant light shone on the life and death ahead of them, and illuminated the grandeur and decline of the past. Most of that crowd of young poets were merely simple youths. Their art was immature and incomplete. But it was free of falsity or artifice. Their youthful lives flowed from their lips, and their tears of passion streaked their cheeks. Try to remember that their fresh, overflowing emotions made many young men all but forget food and sleep. And remember too that the pathos and anguish of recent times drove many young men mad.

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Poetry and the American Public

SAMUEL HAZO

How American poems reach the eyes and ears of their potential audience in the United States is a matter that too often has been left to advertisers, promoters, and other publicists. Because it can be regarded as literary sociology rather than literary criticism or literature itself, writers and critics as well as teachers of literature have avoided the subject. They have devoted much more energy to the inner workings and trappings of poetry: the establishment and accreditation of writing programs in sundry universities; maintaining journals where poetry and poetic criticism are regularly published; producing textbooks and anthologies; developing award juries; funding chairs for poets on special or continuing appointments; and so forth. Important as all these are, they touch only peripherally what is of continuing concern to serious poets—particularly, though not exclusively, young poets: How can they bring their poems to public attention?

In the United States there are only two ways of doing this. Poets can publish their work or present it in person, through poetry readings. The former obviously must precede the latter, since few poets who have not already been published are invited to give public readings of their own work. For poets who have published one or more books and are amenable to the idea of public readings (some are not), both these means of reaching (or even creating) their audience are mutually supportive. The published book makes poetry readings possible, and the readings stimulate further interest in the book.

But what about the beginning poets? For them, as for the professors, the publish-or-perish truism is impossible to ignore. The logical consequence of this is that not only are editors in a position to make or break new poets, but that editorial taste and influence actually determine the character of much contemporary poetic literature.

Because publishing is a money-making industry in the United States, the profit motive cannot be overlooked in editorial decisions about what poetry will be published. Yet this is often a marginal consideration, since books of poems are not reputed to yield a minificent revenue to any publisher. I am speaking here, of course, about what is really—regardless of differences in taste—poetry. I am not alluding to recent rushings-into-print of poems by Women (with a capital W) or by young men and women of various Minorities (with a capital M). Such publications can invariably be explained in sexist, ethnic, or ideological terms, and, irrespective of their market value, they have only the most tenuous relation with poetry.

Quite apart from such socio-ideological instances of book production (to be distinguished always from the publication of books), the major American publishers do manage to carry poetry titles regularly on their trade lists. Whether this is done for what is usually called prestige or as a serious commitment to poetry itself is not germane here, although a proper cynic could occupy himself indefinitely with the answer. The books do appear, however, from the following

SAMUEL HAZO's recent books are *Quartered, Inscripts,* and a translation of Denis de Rougemont's *The Growl of Deeper Waters.* He is director of the International Poetry Forum in Pittsburgh. His forthcoming novel, *The Very Fall of the Sun,* will appear in the fall issue of the *Hudson Review.*

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presses: Atheneum; Atlantic Monthly Press; Beacon; Braziller; Crowell; Doubleday; Dutton; Farrar, Straus & Giroux; Follett; Godine; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; Harper & Row; Holt, Rinehart and Winston; Houghton Mifflin; Knopf; Liveright; Macmillan; McGraw-Hill; Morrow; New Directions; Norton; Putnam's; Random House; Scribner's; Simon & Schuster; Vanguard; Viking; and World. I hasten to add that there may be others and that any omission is inadvertent. Supplementing such trade houses are the following university presses, which have demonstrated an equal if not a more vigorous interest in publishing poetry: Chicago, Cornell, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana State, Massachusetts, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Oxford, Pittsburgh, Princeton, Rutgers, Vanderbilt, Virginia, Wesleyan, and Yale. Allowing for an addition or a recent subtraction here or there, these are the principal United States publishers that are engaged in the publication of poetry, and it is invariably upon their editors and/or editorial boards that the character of current American poetry depends.

To say this is not to denigrate either the editors or their boards but simply to indicate where the sources of decision are. The influence of these decisions upon modern poetry is not (repeat *not*) negligible. Some years ago, for example, I saw a listing (safely alphabetical) of the most significant poets in the United States at that time. I do not know who compiled the list, but I do know that the poets named, significant or otherwise, were those with published books to their credit, and that this fact was directly traceable to a particular publisher and to particular editors. Consequently, I would have found the names of the editors as significant as the poets named.

Concerning the actual production of books of poems, the following questions have a small but necessary place. For example, how many books of poems are published annually? How many copies are printed in a first edition? How much advertising promotion is used? What is the quality of design, typography, and paper? Before attempting to answer these questions, one must bear in mind that we are living in a time of higher and higher publication costs. It is not surprising, therefore, that the publishers already named are publishing fewer books of poetry each season. A recent Scribner's catalog, for instance, did not include a single book of poems. The explanation for this is purely economic: books are expensive to produce, and high production costs tend to prohibit the publishing of books that do not recoup investment. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that, on the average, publishers of poetry release anywhere from one to four books of poems a year, and that the usual first printing runs to about two thousand copies.

Space advertising for such books is, relatively speaking, minimal compared to what is allocated for "featured" books by the same publishers. Some direct-mail advertising is used (particularly by university presses), and I understand that this is not an unfruitful method of eliciting orders. (The power of American advertising being what it is, one wonders what would happen if maximum rather than token amounts were spent to launch books of poems. If books of dubious value have been successfully hawked, it would be instructive to see what would happen to books of poems treated by the same techniques.)

What can be said of the design and typography of books of poems? This varies. High in quality (as well as in comparative price, I think) are the books published by Atheneum, presented in the distinctive elongated form conceived by Harry Ford. Ford has also designed the format of the varied Braziller poetry series, which is edited by Richard Howard. Harcourt's editions are not as well designed as they once were, even for a poet of the stature of Richard Wilbur. The same holds true for poetry published by Harper & Row, whose so-so editions of the superb poems of William Stafford are simply not that admirable as books. On the other hand, Scribner's and Knopf have not broken much new ground at all, though both are capable of producing books of excellent quality when the spirit or the bank account moves them. Consider Scribner's edition of Frederick Morgan's *A Book of Change* and Knopf's editions of William Meredith's *Earth Walk* and the more recent translations by Burton Raffel, W. S. Merwin, and Nguyen Ngoc Bich in *A Thousand Years of Vietnamese Poetry*. Random

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House, except for a commitment to poets of an earlier generation, has been more conservative than its reputation would imply. New Directions retains the quality that earned James Laughlin his unique, maverick reputation among American publishers, and Norton continues to do right by Adrienne Rich and A. R. Ammons (although I think that Ammons's *Collected Poems* was a rather overcrowded book of poetry). Farrar, Straus & Giroux has never relaxed its commitment to quality, whether the poet be Robert Lowell, or John Berryman, or Jean Valentine. David Godine's new series of chapbooks has the flexibility to accommodate the works of new and previously published poets in well-designed, reasonably priced volumes.

Among the university presses there is an unmistakable insistence on high quality of design and production. This, considering the strict budgets under which such presses operate, is deserving of special commendation. Chicago, Indiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Pittsburgh, Princeton, Rutgers, Wesleyan, and Yale have for years published books that are immensely attractive. The superb work of Gary Gore on the University of Pittsburgh poetry series has received (and deserved) major awards in design since the series began in 1967.

Quality of production aside, what characterizes the publishers' policy toward poets who are fortunate or persistent enough to get their work published at all? Again no easy generalization is possible. Unnamed shall be those publishers who take on a first book by a poet and, for reasons never made clear to the poet, subsequently abandon him to his own devices. I refer here not to poets whose second books are refused for literary reasons, but only to those whose second books are never even considered. The result of this inhumane policy is that there are more poets than one would care to list who have manuscripts for their second books but no publishers—a situation that prompted me to remark to Elizabeth Kray of the Academy of American Poets that a national award should be given to poets for *second* books. (I noticed recently that the Academy's Lamont Poetry Prize will henceforth be given not for first but for second books.) The usual policy of most publishers, however, is to keep faith with their poets from book to book. Such a policy tends to discourage newcomers from making the publishers' lists, but it is certainly not without merit in light of less scrupulous alternatives.

Where can poets whose work had not been previously published in book form go? One answer is that they can get in touch with the above-listed trade houses and university presses, or at least those among them whose policies do not preclude acceptance of new work. If a submitted manuscript is good, it will sooner or later find a publisher. A more competitive alternative is now provided through certain national contests sponsored by various institutions in cooperation with trade publishers or university presses. A case in point is the Walt Whitman Award, which William Meredith and William Stafford have judged to date as one of the Copernicus Awards of the Academy of American Poets in association with Harper & Row. A second example is the Devins Award, offered under the auspices of the Kansas City Poetry Center in cooperation with the University of Missouri Press. A third is the reputable Yale Younger Poets Series, which Stanley Kunitz supervises and which has had a distinguished record from James Agee's *Permit Me Voyage* to the present. A fourth is the International Poetry Forum's yearly United States Award, which has an annually varying board of judges, grants a $2,000 prize over and above publication, and is conducted in association with the University of Pittsburgh Press. The Wesleyan Poetry Series, which was suggested by Richard Wilbur years ago and which ranks as one of the most innovative publishing ventures in the history of university presses, continues to publish new books but without some of the press's original verve. All of the above are supplemented by new books from the Ecco Press, an affiliate of Daniel Halpern's journal *Antaeus,* and the previously cited series from Braziller.

Naturally, these publishing possibilities offer only a limited outlet for first books. Any of the judges of the various national contests will admit without hesitation that the number of manuscripts submitted each year for screening and judging is awesome. The figure fluctuates, but a thousand manuscripts for any given annual contest are not uncommon.

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Even allowing that a sizable percentage will be forever unpublishable, it is obvious that many deserving poets will go unpublished.

Exclusive of publication in book form, how else can poets bring their poems to public attention? The only intermediaries are journals, quarterlies, tabloids, and various national magazines. Certain old names like the *Kenyon Review*, the *Western Review*, *Botteghe Oscura*, and others are long gone. A once prestigious journal, the *Paris Review*, is poetically not what it once was—and that is putting it kindly. *Poetry* of Chicago has, under its recent editors, developed a sameness that is far from trailblazing; indeed, its contents seem curiously repetitive and, like *Time*, frequently predictable. The same cannot be said of David Wagoner's more vigorous and catholic editorship of *Poetry Northwest*. *Saturday Review*, after recent changes, has become a new magazine, from which poetry is now excluded. This is truly regrettable, since John Ciardi, as poetry editor, for years maintained a high standard for acceptance and publication of excellent poems. On the other hand, certain mainstays continue to live up to their long-established reputations for high quality: *The New Yorker*, the *Nation*, the *Hudson Review*, the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, the *American Scholar*, occasionally the *Atlantic* and *Harper's*, and, not often enough, the *American Review*. New journals like *Antaeus, Mundus Artium, Field*, and *TriQuarterly* have shown a serious commitment to poetry, and the *American Poetry Review* has the scope (and, one hopes, the funding) to make a unique contribution to contemporary poetry. Moreover, the *American Poetry Review* and *Parnassus* are two of the relatively few journals that publish anything approaching thorough criticism of new books of poems. Most other journals settle for the so-called chronicle of new books in which the result is not criticism at all, but simply "notice."

Yet it must be kept in mind that journals, like publishing houses, are no better than their editors, and there are many editors of once-significant journals who now manage to live on the past, rather than the present, reputation of these publications. I know one poet, for example, who for years submitted poems to several well-known journals only to have them summarily rejected. But when, following an overnight success with a book of prose, she submitted poems to the same journals, she received air-mailed acceptances for admittedly weaker poems than those she had first submitted.

Regardless of the attitude of poets toward their alternatives with publishers or magazine editors, these alternatives are still the principal ones. Combined, they form an almost ineluctable pattern. Although publication in book form is primary to the beginning poet, intermediary publication in journals and quarterlies remains significant—not decisive certainly, but not negligible either—for publishers to whom manuscripts may be subsequently submitted. The published book in turn begets poetry readings, and, since these are the only ways for poets and their public to meet, the cycle is complete.

None of this is meant to exclude the brave work of presses like Black Sparrow and Unicorn and other small publishers of poetry, but these ventures in selected collections of poems in semideluxe or limited editions have to fight an unenviable battle for national distribution—which has always been the sink-or-swim problem confronting private presses. Nor, in regard to periodical publication, do I mean to overlook Thomas Lask's erstwhile efforts to include poetry on a daily basis on the editorial page of the *New York Times*. That effort was never meant to resurrect the broadside tradition of publishing, but it did bring poems to the attention of hundreds of thousands of newspaper readers. Indeed, it seems to me, in retrospect, that this is one of the best ways of bringing worthy poems to a large audience on a regular basis.

Do these limited ways of getting poets' work in print tend, of necessity, to exclude good poems from public attention? I suspect the answer must be yes. If only a limited number of books of poetry are published each year (including many that never deserve to be published at all), and if this number is necessarily much smaller than the number of publishable poets waiting in the wings, it is apparent that the work of some good poets will not be published. But I would qualify this by repeating that a good poet, if he has sufficient persistence and minimal luck, will eventually

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The 1975 Phi Beta Kappa Book Awards

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Award

THE VENTURE OF ISLAM: Volume 1, The Classical Age of Islam; Volume 2, The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods; Volume 3, The Gunpowder Empires and Modern Times. *By Marshall G. S. Hodgson. University of Chicago Press. $20 each.*

Citation: "It will be said of these three volumes for years to come in the field of Islamic studies that they represent a monumental and authoritative grand synthesis of the entire historical development and most of the geographic sweep of Islamic civilization; that the only comparison that can be made is with studies of the French historian Fernand Braudel. . . . It is the Islamic perception of the world and its way of being-in-the-world as a civilization among other civilizations that Hodgson presents as a coherent unity more potently than it has ever before been presented to the Western world. . . . It may be the case that Hodgson has made a breakthrough in the area of philosophy of history and may be seen to have identified a new pattern of historical change. His breakthrough is the concept of a civilization as an original identity shaped and reshaped in a continuum of dialectical change. Surely the concept of civilization as dialectical ongoing continuum is now desperately needed, to deal intelligibly with China, India, Israel as well as Islam—civilizations all of which have been fossilized by the prevailing interpretations of history."

The Christian Gauss Award

YOUNG THOMAS HARDY. *By Robert Gittings. Atlantic, Little Brown and Company. $10.95.*

Citation: "Mr. Gittings's book is a work of distinguished scholarship that illuminates the obscure but significantly formative years of a major novelist and poet, the problems that haunted him, the people who filled his life. The evocation of time and place is sensitive, and the biographical material is perceptively woven into the critical interpretation of the novels and poems that arose from Hardy's youthful experiences. The book is a rare combination of biography and literary criticism based on authoritative research, gracefully composed, and consistently interesting to both scholar and layman."

The Phi Beta Kappa Award in Science

THE HEALING HAND. Man and Wound in the Ancient World. *By Guido Majno. Harvard University Press. $25.*

Citation: "Dr. Guido Majno has given us a book that, while it concentrates on ancient pathology, describes not only healing hands but healers' minds as they developed in their ambient civilizations. Trauma and its attempted cures are discussed for ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, China, India, and Rome. The author has not confined himself, in preparing this genial and delightfully written treatise, to scholarly combing of the literature, with appropriate expert advice; he has even performed some laboratory experiments of his own to test the efficacy of some ancient treatments. His book therefore combines the study of many worlds of intellect and action. It provides general readers, as well as historians of antiquity and of medicine, with unique insight into the counterplay of ideas in various realms of thought and of place."

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find a publisher. Like writers in other genres, he must accept the fact that certain poets of dubious quality somehow manage to get their books in print, since nonpoetry is often accepted as poetry itself. (The example of Rod McKuen has been cited so often that mentioning his name here seems tantamount to kicking a kitten, but McKuen is as good, or as bad, an example as there is.) Finally, he must recognize that "timely poetry"—which is as much a contradiction in terms as "still-life" or "religious article"—often preempts the publication of the kind of literature that Ezra Pound once identified as "contemporary." Such foolishness is a continuing aspect of American publishing and would seem to justify Edgar Lee Masters's paraphrase of Barnum: "You can fool part of the people some of the time, and that is enough." Nevertheless, these obfuscations are no more than occupational hazards. Good fiction writers face similar problems: Wright Morris has forgotten what most fictioneers and most coprophiliacs of the moment have yet to learn.

To bewail the hazards and inequities of publishing in the United States is really to be diverted from the much larger problem of how writers reach their public. Unlike writers of fiction, poets do not have, nor can they count on, a large audience that is seriously interested in poetry. The fiction writer, on the other hand, can, does, and should assume the existence of a rather large audience that is generically interested in reading fiction. Considering the indifference to books in general and to poetry in particular, it is difficult to ascribe any reason, short of inevitability, to why poetry (or worthwhile prose) continues to be written in this country. Yet, as has happened in similar eras, it *is* written. And despite Karl Shapiro's remark that the art of poetry is "foreign" to Americans, it is important for us that poetry continue to be written. For poetry, along with many of the fine arts, both creates and measures the condition of the American soul.

What is of concern is that, compared with the total reading population, the audience seriously interested in poetry is small. Its size, of course, can be increased by artificial stimuli—as when publishers or assorted reputation-builders occasionally take it upon themselves to "make" a particular poet. Frost received, perhaps even courted, such treatment in his later years. Robert Lowell was singled out at one point, and A. R. Ammons seems to be the current beneficiary, with the largely selfless assistance of Harold Bloom. I do not mean to imply that these excellent poets do not deserve lionization, but rather that selecting them for such treatment tends to be based on a combination of capriciousness and luck—and also emphasizes the *poet* as phenomenon, not his poems. As a result, importance is attached not to what the poet has made, but to what others choose to make of the poet. The same gratuitousness that favored Frost or favors Lowell or Ammons could just as easily have fallen to John Berryman (as it seems to be doing posthumously), William Meredith, Richard Wilbur, Anthony Hecht, Stanley Kunitz, Carolyn Kizer, or John Ciardi. There is as much arbitrariness in such selections as there was in the various poetry anthologies that Louis Untermeyer and Oscar Williams edited. For years, the anthologies of these men, neither of whom was a poet of real consequence, were regarded as the canon of modern poetry; whereas all they revealed were the rather limited tastes of Untermeyer and Williams.

Similarly, the fate of books of poems in the hands of reviewers or endorsers is now at the level of a joke, except in the case of *Parnassus*, the *Hudson Review*, *Commonweal*, and various other journals of equal quality. Who, for example, can explain how or why the editors of the *New York Review of Books* review the poets they review? In the same sense, Helen Vendler's almost exclusive grip on the seasonal omnibus reviews in the Sunday *New York Times* is frequently a nod to nothing more than seasonal interests. Although executed with more aplomb, Richard Howard's jacket endorsements of platoons of poets suggests a kind of imprimaturism that is so widespread as to be meaningless.

Apart from such practices, there remains the whole panorama of the annual poetry awards, the machinations involved in the picking of juries, the pushing of favorite candidates, and so forth. This sort of "rating" and "court packing" has as much relation to poetry as side betting does to the beauty of thoroughbreds; but it nonetheless creates and

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encourages a competitiveness among poets that poets in general and the Academy of American Poets in particular do little to discourage. The result is that poetry tends to be regarded by the interested public as being as dissolute as democracy, with the same preponderance of lobbies, chicanery, back-scratching, and other practices.

Despite all attempts to make poets reputable, rather than make their poems known, the fact remains that poetry readers are almost minute in number, compared with the readers of novels, popular history, biography, journalism, and so on. I suspect that one reason why this is so is the traditional way poetry has been taught. If a student's first encounters with poetry are pleasurable, it stands to reason that he will remain well disposed toward reading poetry.

What, then, are the alternatives in and out of academic surroundings? It seems to me first of all that there is no substitute for the experience of the poem, preferably the heard poem. In contemporary terms, this provides poets with the second of their two opportunities to reach the public—an opportunity rooted in the auditory nature of poetry. After all, the bardic tradition predated both the five-thousand-year-old birthday of the alphabet and the five-hundred-year-old birthday of the printing press. This is of more than historical importance to poetry: it marks the essential difference between poetry and prose, which is that prose is written and poetry is heard. Its auditory dimension ("in the beginning was the word," and that word was spoken) is part of its meaning.

Poets ought to be encouraged to remember that reading their poems to others is the culmination of the poetic art, not just a way of airing their views or supplementing their incomes. The opportunities for them to do so are in fact multiplying in the United States. At present, according to one estimate, there are more than 125 centers and forums in this country that regularly sponsor poetry readings. This is in addition to college and university programs in which poets have been included for years and in addition to federal- or state-sponsored programs that involve poets with high school students. Yet if the act of listening is difficult for even the best of listeners, poets should assuredly try not to contribute to the difficulty. Audiences for poetry share at least one thing with all other audiences: they can be lost.

How do poets themselves regard face-to-face meetings with audiences? There is no single answer. Some poets believe that their responsibility ends after they put a poem on paper; they would rather, in Philip Booth's phrase, that the reader "listen to it from the page." Others, such as Donald Hall, have written that public readings can be dangerous to a poet if he comes to imagine himself as an actor for his own poetic script. And, finally, still other poets welcome the opportunities to read their own work so they can see how well their poems come across to people who are listening to them for the first time. (I exclude from this listing those instances in which poets have arrived for readings ill prepared, or blasé, or drunk. This makes chewy gossip for those interested in such matters, but nothing more.)

Whatever the validity of these attitudes, it remains true that the proper destiny of a poem is to be heard, or at least to be read as if it were being heard. T. S. Eliot's theory of the "auditory imagination" means this if it means anything at all. In an essay from *Secondary Worlds*, W. H. Auden (who was an adequate though not gifted reader of his own work) summarized this succinctly: "Poetry," he wrote, "is personal speech in its purest form. It is concerned and only concerned with human beings as unique persons . . . . It is essentially a spoken, not a written word. One can never grasp a poem one is reading unless one hears the actual sound of the words, and its meaning is the outcome of a dialogue between the words of the poem and the response of whoever is listening to them. Not only is every poem unique, but its significance is unique for each person who responds to it."

Auden's assertions do not take into consideration the range of talent possessed by individual poets as readers or reciters. Are all poets the best readers of their own work? In certain cases, would it not be wiser to have professional readers perform this service? Granted there are poets who are poor readers. Granted, too, there are many who do not take poetry readings seriously. But one can-

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not dismiss the oral dimension of poetry because some poets tend to denigrate it or do poorly at it. In *The Seamless Web*, Stanley Burnshaw cites the further difficulty, if not impossibility, of reciting poems that rely almost entirely on typography (some of e. e. cummings, for example) for their effect. "How much, in fact, can any audience experience," asks Burnshaw,

> from a single hearing of any new poem which may call for thoughtful study? Limited as he is by these and other conditions, the poet-reciter does well to choose poems which his auditors will best be able to stay with in their minds. To do otherwise invites the embarrassments of their half-hearing, hence of half-listening—which can also arise with the best chosen text. For even poems suited to the platform are hard to perform well. They demand an extraordinary talent which—as any devotee of recitals soon discovers—very few poets possess. And why should one expect them to possess it? Opera composers are not coloraturas. Composition and performance are different arts; rarely does the gift for both inhabit the same body.

Compelling as these reservations are, I feel that there are more reasons for encouraging the revitalization of the oral or bardic tradition than for remaining indifferent or opposed to it. First, it seems by definition essential to the appreciation of the poem—and this holds true whether the reciter of the poem is the poet himself or another person. Second, it is beneficial to poets simply to hear themselves say their poems; frequently their ears detect flaws that their eyes missed. Third, poetry readings quite literally create audiences that would not otherwise exist and, in so doing, make the appreciation of poetry an active rather than a passive activity—that is, listeners must make a conscious effort to respond, to participate by their very attention in what they are hearing. Of course, the audiences for such recitals may be small, but this can be explained by the fact that talent for active listening may be underdeveloped. Auditory sensitivity can be refined by developing an audience that, through habitual experience in listening, can become critically attuned to hearing poetry, so to speak, *live*. The development of such an audience is possible. In a larger sense, however, American poets can develop a national audience by perfecting the act of saying their poems well in public. The quality of the spoken poems will do the rest.

Test Case

ON SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY. *By Roy A. Medvedev. Translated and edited by Ellen de Kadt. Knopf. $12.50.*

Reviewed by STANISLAV L. ANDRESKI

Nikita Khrushchev was the first ruler of Russia who was deposed and allowed to live in freedom. The revival of the czarist practice of exiling political opponents constitutes another important step away from terror and toward more civilized methods of suppressing opposition. Now the fate of Roy Medvedev will be an important indication of how far this process of relative liberalization has gone; for his book is the first comprehensive critical political analysis by an author who continues to live in the USSR. Andrei Amalrik has been sent to jail for writing "Will the USSR Survive Until 1984?" but his criticisms are more cutting; while Sakharov, whose essay on coexistence is much more cautious, has not been imprisoned.* In the magnitude of deviation from the official line, Medvedev falls somewhere in the middle. Anyway he is not in the least a revolutionary or a hater of the Soviet establishment, and his attitude toward it is not at all like the attitude of the Western Marxists toward private enterprise. To find a similar degree of reformism we should look at Ernest Bevin's or Herbert Morrison's attitude toward British political and economic institutions, rather than at what is called "dissent" in Western Europe or North America today.

STANISLAV L. ANDRESKI is professor of sociology at the University of Reading, England. The latest of his many books is *Reflections on Inequality*.

* This was written before Sakharov's more recent and bolder pronouncements which have brought him harrassment but not imprisonment. In Stalin's days he would have been sent to jail for the rest of his life for saying such things in private, let alone publicly and in print.

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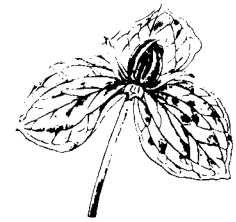

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Medvedev adores Lenin, is proud of the achievements of the system, wishes to maintain the Communist party rule and the collectivist economy, admires Brezhnev and praises him for being neither vain nor vindictive. All he advocates are gradual and peaceful reforms that would lead to a modicum of democracy and freedom of opinion and movement. In economic matters he would go no further than Lenin's New Economic Policy, which allowed private small business and farming. He abjures any intention of setting up a clandestine movement, and pins his hopes on persuading the people at the top to be more tolerant and to yield some of their power.

Whereas engaging in "dissent" in the West is often lucrative fun, it takes great courage to criticize the official line in Russia. It cannot be said, however, that this book throws an entirely new light on the Soviet system. It does, of course, contain much interesting information, but unprejudiced and well-informed outsiders have for a long time been aware both of the achievements that Medvedev praises (such as in industrialization, education, and medical care) and of the vices that he exposes (broadly, terror in the past and bureaucratic stultification and sycophancy in the present). The sidelight that startled me most is about the applause with which pictures of Stalin are often greeted in cinemas by the ordinary public. Is this an ineradicable conditioned reflex or masochistic servility? Medvedev attributes this strange phenomenon to the common people's resentment against the bureaucrats: the vision of big bosses being smitten by the tyrant has a certain appeal to the underdogs.

Our admiration for the author's heroic dedication to truth should not lead us to accept all his interpretations, which are not always convincing. Like so many other Marxists, he forgets about his master's principle of the unimportance of an individual when he explains Stalinism as a product of the wickedness of a clique, if not of one man, who have betrayed Lenin's mission. Yet there are good reasons to believe that terror and the cult of personality would have occurred under another man's auspices had Stalin died earlier. I would even argue that the great purges were a nonaccidental stage in the evolution of the system rather than a result of one man's paranoia or wickedness. As the revolution was inspired by totally unrealizable ideals of absolute equality combined with liberty, fraternal sharing of all wealth with each receiving according to his needs, the system that emerged could not fail to contradict the ideology on all the most fundamental points. Moreover, a police state and a command economy could only be run by obedient, down-to-earth managers, not unduly worried about twisting the doctrine, while the fiery and dogmatic demagogues and disputatious scholastic fundamentalists had to be discarded from all positions of authority or influence. And since they were indomitable and power-hungry fanatics, greatly skilled in conspiratorial arts, the dictator could only feel safe when they were all dead, or at least in jail.

The brevity and sketchiness of Medvedev's chapter on economic reforms is rather out of tune with the Marxist notion of the primacy of economic factors. Medvedev favors autonomous cooperatives and decentralized management with the workers' participation. All these are no doubt good things, and (as the examples of Poland and Hungary show), if tolerated on the fringes, they may even help government-owned big industry. But what will remain of planning if freedom and democracy are pushed into key industries? Medvedev does not face this dilemma (which no one in the West has solved either). He does not want to have a market economy, and wants to have planning as well as freedom and democracy. Effective planning, however, requires that those who have to carry out the plans obey the planners; for if they are in a position to haggle and refuse, planning becomes doodling. So a supporter of the Soviet status quo could well criticize Medvedev for advocating the British recipe for falling between two stools: where there is neither a proper market economy nor effective planning.

Among the weakest aspects of the book are the invocations of Marx in support of the pleas for greater intellectual freedom, because it was Marx who contaminated the communist and socialist ideas (which he did not invent) with pseudo-science and dogma-

(Continued on page 304)

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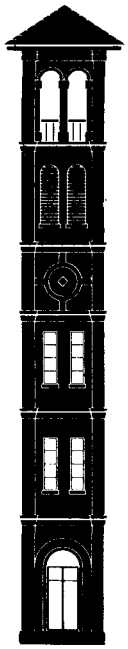

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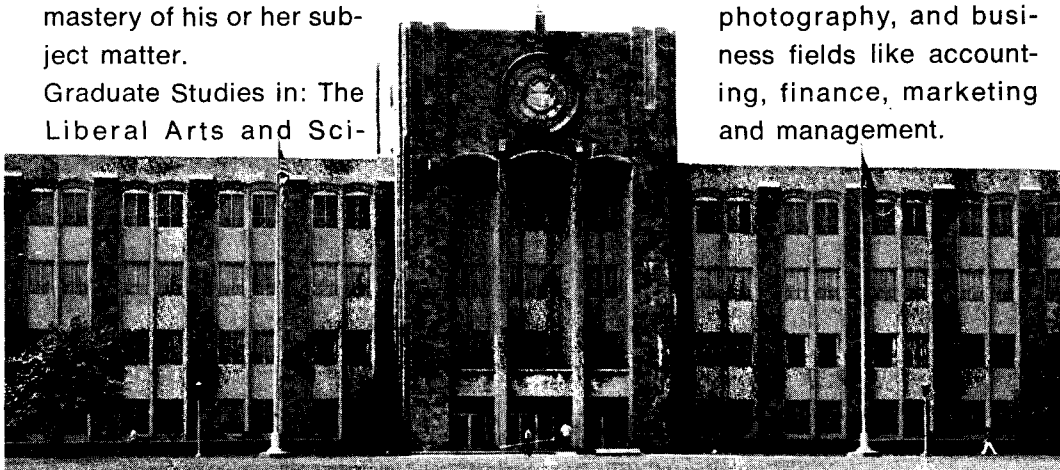

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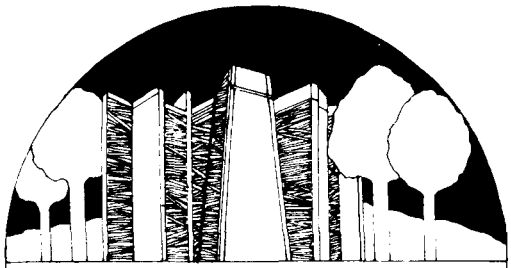

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(*Continued from page 292*)

tism. Even worse: in contrast to other prophets like Robert Owen, Saint-Simon, and Proudhon, who wanted to build a new society on the foundations of altruism and demanding morality, Marx appealed to hate. With the aid of a woolly pseudo-philosophy, he preached a negation of universalistic ethics, thus offering his disciples a liberation from moral restraints. It is not surprising that such a doctrine has proved to be very handy (and much in demand) as a weapon for seizing power or maintaining a tyranny, but any attempt to use it for moral persuasion in favor of greater tolerance must be counter-productive.

The Soviet system exhibits many impressive characteristics that can elicit approval from an old-fashioned army officer, but are the exact opposite of what the Marxists are dangling before the eyes of the populace in the West. There you have a vast empire governed by capable, energetic, and dedicated rulers who know what they want, make long-range plans, and with cunning and determination pursue a consistent policy. They are promptly obeyed by the hardworking and well-trained population. Although petty pilfering of government property is common, there is no organized crime, no drug traffic, no layabouts living on public funds. The streets are often drab but always safe and clean, since anyone throwing rubbish has to pay a heavy fine on the spot. Pedestrians stop before a red light even on a street empty of traffic. There are no hippy teachers, and the discipline in the schools is strict. There are no disheveled rowdies in the universities, and the students are paid according to the marks obtained in the frequent examinations. Pornography, obscene language, and sexual activities in public places are forbidden. The Party expels members found guilty of laziness, drunkenness, sexual deviations or extreme laxity, scruffy appearance or unseemly behavior. The radio, television, and newspapers are neither informative nor stimulating, but instead of spreading demoralization (as they do in the West) they extol the virtues of hard work, patriotism, and respect for authority. Despite the cumbrousness of the administrative machine, the all-pervasive stultifying red tape, and waste occasioned by the lack of incentives in many fields and bad coordination, economic progress is assured by the government's power to compel the population to live frugally and to invest about one-third of the national income in developing productive capacity. Young men are toughened by long and hard military service. The armed forces are large, well equipped, highly trained, and disciplined, and their great strength may yet bring substantial economic benefits when it comes to an international redistribution of such scarce natural resources as oil.

Few Westerners—least of all the intellectuals creative in nontechnical spheres—would enjoy the work load, the regimentation and drabness of this way of life. Nonetheless, especially when compared with the disarray and decadence of the Western democracies during recent years, the Soviet system can be defended or even praised truthfully—but from the standpoint of the traditional notions of national interest and "*la raison d'état*" that places a high value on order, discipline, stability, strength, and the likelihood of survival and expansion. In contrast, only the grossest twisting of words and evidence can reconcile Marx's utopian doctrines with an approval of even the best aspects of the Soviet reality.

It is not particularly strange that the Soviet government allows no organized opposition, for such tolerance is extremely rare in the history of mankind and is always accompanied by a system of checks and balances. Unchallenged supremacy, however, need not entail the blanket smothering of inquiry and analysis that has been the bane of the intellectual life in the communist countries. The reason for this is that—partly out of genuine conviction stemming from early indoctrination, partly out of inertia, partly because they don't want to rock the boat, and partly because of the usefulness of this ideology for fostering disaffection among the subjects of foreign powers—the rulers force upon the population an image of their society which is totally at variance with the reality. The reach of the censors could be drastically reduced without fundamental changes in the structure of power, if the antiquated doctrine could be replaced by a less rigid ideology that would not oblige people to make palpably

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untrue statements. As a matter of fact, all the steps that have humanized and liberalized the system (to a much greater extent in Poland and Hungary than in Russia) have been connected with a trend away from the sectarian mentality and toward a pragmatic bureaucracy or technocracy inspired by an ideology (rather than a doctrine) that can best be described as populist paternalism, and that comprises some genuine concern on the part of the rulers for the welfare of the masses—provided they obey orders and do not dispute the fundamental principle that the Party knows best what is good for everybody.

Unlike Medvedev, I do not see how the political structure of the USSR could evolve toward a democracy—that is, representative government based on free and honest elections—so long as the economy remains under extremely centralized and total control. I do believe, however, that a gradual civilizing and liberalizing tendency is at work, and that it stems from the process which Medvedev does not welcome and which Djilas condemns: the consolidation of the new elite. To enjoy their privileges, members of the elite had to stop the terror, prevent the rise of a new despot, and put some limits on the powers of the police; and they alone had the power to do it. The evolution toward a regularized oligarchy will be completed if Brezhnev quietly retires and is replaced by a successor elected by his peers in accordance with orderly procedure. With the elimination of crass poverty, the rulers can control the population without recourse to mass executions or deportations; while the spread of education, combined with the acquisition of the taste for various refinements of civilization, will make them increasingly averse to wanton brutality. The resulting situation will remain just as remote from Marx's visions of equality and the withering of the state as from John Stuart Mill's ideals of liberalism or Andrew Jackson's practice of democracy. But it is better to be governed by businesslike and pragmatic, though authoritarian, organization men than by doctrinaire sectarians eager to snuff out heretics. The fate of Roy Medvedev—the heroic but undangerous advocate of moderate reforms—will provide a good indication of how far the USSR has traveled along this road.

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THE CLASSIC: LITERARY IMAGES OF PERMANENCE AND CHANGE. *By Frank Kermode. Viking Press. $7.95.*

Reviewed by GERALD GRAFF

Some time ago in our culture—it would be hard to say precisely when—having an identity crisis became a more honorable thing than having an identity. Literature and literary criticism were not untouched by this mood. Some critics began arguing that literary meaning is so open-ended, indeterminate, and unparaphrasable that it is no use trying to say what a literary work "means." Others argued that the term "literature" is indefinable, and that one ought not try to define it, lest creativity be stifled.

A recent expression of this distrust of definition, attended with suitable propaganda attesting to its newness and its revolutionary import, is the trend in criticism that seeks to elevate the reader to the status of co-creator of the work, or perhaps chief creator. Certain vanguard French critics have argued that texts must be severed from their "origins" and opened to an infinite "free play" of significations determined by the reader. In this country, Harold Bloom champions critical "misreading," a practice in which, as he states it, "all criticism becomes prose-poetry." Another critic, Ihab Hassan, practices something called "paracriticism," which he describes as making "mixed use of disconfirmation and discontinuity, of space, silence, self-query, and surprise." One might think we have reverted to nineteenth-century impressionism—criticism conceived as a report of "adventures among masterpieces." But there is nothing naïve or old-fashioned about the new impressionism, if that is what it is. Its rationale lies in some of the most advanced ideas of literary modernism.

Some sense of what these ideas are is given in Frank Kermode's *The Classic: Literary Images of Permanence and Change* (originally presented as the T. S. Eliot Memorial Lectures at the University of Kent). Kermode is an unlikely celebrant of the new theory of reading. When he too urges the reader's emancipation from his traditional subordination to the text, it is in the interest of saving the classic itself: it is only by rewriting the classic in our own terms that we assure its permanence and continuity.

Kermode begins by sketching the historical connection between the concept of the classic and that of empire. For Roman and Christian Europe, the empire represented a transcendent unity that did not change, even though its embodiment in specific persons and institutions was subject to vicissitudes. This assumption of imperial continuity depended on acts of "translation" which made the present into an expression of a continuous past. Through such translation, the ideals of Vergil and of pagan Rome, for example, could be made to harmonize with Christian ideals of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The imperial idea permitted Europeans to see new classics (Dante) or pre-imperial ones (Homer) as allegorical expressions of a single transcendent order. The classics thus testified to the unity of all history, the eternal presentness of the past.

Kermode describes T. S. Eliot's attempt to revive this imperial idea of the classic in his theory of tradition, an attempt doomed to failure in our age of increasing "demythologizing" of the past. Eliot's view notwithstanding, the modern view of the classic, according to Kermode, presupposes historical discontinuity, not continuity. The ancients are seen as alien to the moderns in situation and in outlook. A consequence of this shift is that the classic can no longer be presumed to mean what it has always meant. No ancient works and few even of relatively recent origin can maintain their relevance unless new meanings are attributed to them deriving from present concerns, meanings that would have been incomprehensible before. Whereas the imperial classic depended on authority, the modern classic—whether it be a modern work or an imperial classic read by moderns—must surrender its authority to the reader.

The bulk of this argument is carried forward through Kermode's interpretations of *The House of the Seven Gables, The Scarlet Letter,*

GERALD GRAFF is associate professor of English at Northwestern University. His writing has appeared in *The New Yorker, Dissent,* and other journals.

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and *Wuthering Heights*. These interpretations are supposed to illustrate his contention that a literary work is not a "message," something "intended" by its author on which the reader is obliged to focus his attention. Hawthorne's numerous ambiguities, Kermode argues, are "evasions of narrative authority, and imply that each man must make his own reading." Thus in *The Scarlet Letter*, "it is for the reader" to make sense of the many meanings of the letter itself and of the novel as a whole "by his own imaginative collaboration." In such works, "the old contracts between signifier and signified, between the authoritative maker and the reader certain that there is a right interpretation, are boldly broken. Such a text must continually draw attention to itself as something written, as open and plural, itself a type of things to come, in a time when all books must be read with a difference."

Reading this last passage, one wonders why all books must henceforth be read "with a difference," especially if in the phrasing one misses the allusion to the criticism of Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, and the new French criticism. Such allusiveness is typical of Kermode's technique of argumentation: he does not say that such-and-such is the case, but takes it for granted that the reader, flatteringly treated as a fellow initiate, already knows and assumes it. That historical conditions compel us to accept the view the critic wishes us to accept is presented as a proposition not open to argument. This assumed consensus, from which the reader dissents at the risk of seeming to hold the most passé opinions, makes it unnecessary for the critic to defend his point. This same technique is seen in Kermode's offhand references to "a new world without certainties" and "the new inconceivable past and the unknowable future." How certain we have become that there are no certainties!

When we look closely at Kermode's own method of interpreting literary texts, we find it does not confirm his statements about how these texts must now be interpreted. He offers an ingenious interpretation of *The House of the Seven Gables*, suggesting that Hawthorne probably read and drew on pre-evolutionary scientific writers such as Agassiz and Buffon, and that his interest in the problem of the permanence of biological types is one of the

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by Hugh Honour

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controlling contexts of the novel. But it is hard to see why Hawthorne's reading should matter if the author's message or intention is presumed to be irrelevant to the interpreter, as Kermode insists they are. If it is really for the reader to make up his own reading, who needs a learned gloss on what Hawthorne probably thought? For that matter, who needs somebody else's interpretation of the work at all?

Kermode assumes that if a text is ambiguous or "plural" in meaning, it is "open" and indeterminate. But this doesn't follow. Ambiguity and even indeterminacy may be determinate things. Hawthorne's device of offering alternative interpretations of events suggests the determinate point that certain aspects of reality are susceptible to conflicting views. We can identify the major alternative meanings and exclude inappropriate ones as the probabilities dictate. Except where a text is unclear, there is no "evasion of narrative authority," no "broken contract" between writer and reader, and no real choice offered to the reader, who either perceives the main meanings or misses the point. Moreover, a hierarchy of multiple meanings exists, and this too must be apprehended correctly. Thus at the end of *The Scarlet Letter,* where one possible interpretation is that there was no mark on the minister's chest, Hawthorne calls into question the "highly respectable witnesses" who testify to this version by characterizing them in a phrase that suggests they are blinded by hypocrisy. It is no use objecting that if we assume literary meanings to be determinate, we dogmatically foreclose debate about them. On the contrary, it is only the presupposition that these meanings are determinate that gives us an object to debate about. This is E. D. Hirsch's point in *Validity in Interpretation,* a work Kermode brushes aside with a few casual phrases. Hirsch concedes that what a text means to us often differs greatly from what it originally meant. But if what it means to us distorts or violates what it originally meant, we are reading not another's word but our own.

The theory that "each man must make his own reading" of a literary work, like the theory that each man creates his own reality, is an overreaction to positivistic philosophy, which conceives the mind as a passive recipient of experience. The fact that acts of interpretation are not passive does not make them less responsible to the external world. Kermode begs the question when he asserts that Hawthorne's works are meant as "invitations to co-production on the part of the reader." Do these invitations specify how the guest is to behave once he is at the event, or do they give him license to smash the furniture and deface the walls? Kermode concedes there are certain limits within which the reader recreates the text, and he admits that nonsense often results from the abuse of the privilege. But he does not say what the limits in question are, and he gives no criteria for distinguishing nonsense from sense.

But the cheerful endorsement of ideas that, if taken seriously, would undermine the values he himself seems to stand for is a persistent pattern in Kermode's criticism. In *The Sense of an Ending* (1965), Kermode proposed (with great equivocation) that men make sense of the world, not by conforming their thoughts to processes outside themselves, but by devising fictions that create a semblance of connection between mind and object. In the earlier book, Kermode did qualify his view by conceding that reality discredits our fictions at times. In this he showed a willingness to talk about fictions behind their backs, even though this way of talking seems to be forbidden by the theory of fictions itself. If our sense-making activity is grounded on fictions, how can we know what a fiction is, or distinguish one from a nonfiction? And how can we determine that a particular interpretive fiction—whether its object is a literary text or an event in the world—is more appropriate than any other? Kermode remains uninterested in such pressing questions. He shares the predicament of numerous would-be defenders of "continuities" (the title of one of his earlier collections), "ideas of order," and "humanistic values," who see no way of getting beyond skeptical and nihilistic views of reality and history. Kermode's means of rescuing tradition by construing it as a subjective fiction only confirms the attacks of those who reject tradition as a consoling illusion.

The revolt against objectivity in interpretation is often part of a confused politics. Partisans of the open-text theory frequently

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imply that those who still believe in the possibility of correct interpretation are so many elitists clinging to a false professional dogma of objectivity. The implication is that worrying about "correctness" in critical interpretation is a kind of bourgeois class-snobbery, something like worrying about correctness in dress or table manners. Sometimes, as in the *Tel Quel* circle, such notions are given a pseudo-Marxian twist, on the assumption that to destroy the authority of the text over the reader is somehow to undermine the prevailing social authority.

Undeniably, the popularity of the open-text theory reflects a legitimate feeling that the standard forms of academic literary study have become mechanical. It is not the objective method of interpretation that has caused this state of affairs, but the publication-production system of the universities. Turning criticism into prose-poetry is not only no antidote, it coincides with the logic of the industry. If the path to professional advancement in literary studies lies in the raw "production" of articles and books, then toleration of novelty in critical method becomes a necessary condition of industrial growth. The privileged status of the criticism that assumes the work to be a determinate object on the page imposes a drag on the mobility of professionals, and must be liquidated.

The open-text theorists operate on the same sort of misplaced diagnosis that moves many modern writers and artists to profess indifference to the way their works are interpreted by the public, or to construct their works in such a way as to frustrate interpretation. These artists conceive their job as merely to make an object or set a process in motion; any ideological import that may be imputed to the work is strictly the audience's business. Here the need to divest one's creation of the burden of meaning, to transfer the authority for the meaning to the reader, assumes that normal communication is a kind of complicity. Such systematic evasion of messages, however, conveys its own kind of message—a complaint against the existing condition of public communication. The subversion of meaning is a distorted criticism of the pseudo-meanings with which public and academic culture are saturated.

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which backfires when employed as a means of conserving high culture, works no better as a strategy of subversion. The strategy is self-defeating because it too is easily packaged and transformed into a commodity. Thus paracriticism becomes a staple of the Modern Language Association, and "radical" modernist art, ideas, decor, and "life styles" are peddled to a public that is eager to enact its alienation the way the experts do it.

Secular Deities

THE NEW DEMONS. *By Jacques Ellul. Translated by Edward Hopkin. Seabury Press. $9.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT NISBET

This book, published first in France two years ago under the title *Les Nouveaux possédés*, is another in the impressive list of works by Jacques Ellul made available to American readers by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., and the Seabury Press. Much is owed the two publishers: with the exception of *The Technological Society*, which appeared in this country in 1964 and became a kind of cult book almost immediately, it is hard to imagine that any of Jacques Ellul's books has had much of a following. I hope I am wrong in that surmise, for Ellul is clearly one of the major French philosophical and critical minds of the century.

Unfortunately, he is still widely categorized as a technophobe, regularly put among those for whom opposition to technology is the central thrust of attack on modernity. This is most regrettable, for it not only diverts attention from Ellul's real significance in contemporary thought, which is religious, but does an injustice even to the central thesis of *The Technological Society*. That book was published in France in 1954 under the title *La Technique ou l'enjeu de siècle*. Now, in French *technique* has pretty much the same meaning it has in English, a meaning distinguishable from "technology" or "technological." The subtitle refers to the "wager" or "bet" or "stake" that contemporary Western man has put up in support of the political, cultural, and intellectual bureaucracy that surrounds him. Save only for some opening pages, this classic has little to say about technology as such; it is far more oriented to the political than to any other single aspect of society; but its overall, clearly stated argument has to do with the dominance of the technical—in politics, morality, religion, the economy, et cetera—at the expense of moral purpose or objective. So much is evident to anyone who merely scans the book. Ellul himself helps us in the following statement: "The term *technique,* as I use it, does not mean machines, technology, or this or that procedure for attaining an end." The word refers, the author goes on, to *"the totality of methods rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency* (for a given stage of development) in *every* field of human activity. Its characteristics are new; the technique of the present has no common measure with that of the past." (Italics in the original.) That is unexceptionably clear, and I should add that in his foreword to the American edition, Robert K. Merton, the sociologist-historian of science, took pains to emphasize that Ellul "is thoroughly familiar with the cant perpetuated by technophobes. . . . Indeed he takes these apart with masterly skill to show them for the empty assertions they typically are."

If there is a single thread running through all of Ellul's many books, it is the retreat or vanquishment of Christianity by modernity, chiefly in its political and administrative manifestations. Ellul is first and foremost a deeply religious lay member of the (Protestant) Reformed Church of France, thoroughly steeped in Christian history and theology. He is also, or was until recently, professor of law and history in the University of Bordeaux, the city where he was born in 1912 and where he has spent most of his life. During World War II he was an active member of the French Resistance along with Malraux, Camus, and Sartre. He is in no sense an ivory-tower critic of the contemporary scene; he has served with distinction as mayor of Bordeaux and is active in various civic and lay-religious works.

It is, however, as a religious thinker that Ellul is and deserves to be best known among

●ROBERT NISBET is Albert Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities at Columbia University. His latest book, *Twilight of Authority,* was published last year.

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those who have read him carefully, even though the reach of his thought puts him also within the orbit of some of the best political and social thinking of our day. From his very earliest works, *The Theological Foundation of Law* (1946) and *The Presence of the Kingdom* (1948), down to this most recent of his books, Ellul's point of departure for his critical observations on political power, the triumph of the technical, the dominance of propaganda, and other aspects of the modern world has been unmistakably religious—more precisely, Christian. What Ellul finds to be the sovereign and overriding fact of this age is the displacement, not of religion in the abstract, but of Christianity. In *The New Demons* he writes: "The effects of dechristianization are quite evident. Individuals have no interest anymore in the questions put to them by Jesus Christ; the questions are regarded as irrelevant and the Christian faith and truth are considered to be completely ineffective for transforming men's situation. The chief preoccupations of men today are political, not spiritual. Modern man no longer understands the language of Christianity."

That brief passage serves as well as any I have seen in Ellul's writings to give guidance to the content and direction of his thought. His book *The Political Illusion* (1965) has to be placed among the best criticisms of the political state, indeed of the whole political habit of mind, since Taine's works on the subject a century ago; so also does his *Propaganda* (1962), a skillful and learned sociological study. Both books have to be seen against a background of what is, in Ellul's terms, spiritual devastation, caused by the signal retreat of Christianity from ascendancy in the West. "Modern society is not to be understood in relation to just any religious society whatever, nor is it to be taken simply as the opposite of religious society in the abstract. No, it emerged from a specific society that thought of itself as Christian, and is to be understood in relation to it."

Ellul's stress upon Christianity rather than generalized religion or the sacred is pointed, not merely here but in his other books. For in his terms it will not do to declare our present society in the West a nonreligious or secular one, though currents of secularism are cer-

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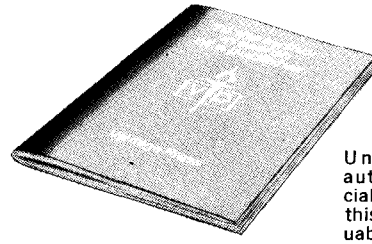

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tainly to be found. From Ellul's very well considered point of view, ours is emphatically a religious age. But, as *The New Demons* argues at length, the content is not what it was for more than a millennium and a half in the West—that is, Christian. Rather, it is an amalgam of worship of political power (under whatever name: socialism, democracy, communism, et cetera), violence, narcotics, sex, and, far from least, community in just about any form in which it seems to offer itself to the young and the old. We are living, Ellul tells us, in the midst of a very genuine religious renascence, one that includes the kind of theological writing associated with a Harvey Cox (on whom Ellul comes down hard); the widening preoccupation with the occult and the irrational; the worship (not acceptance but *worship*) of sex in all its explicit, ritual manifestations in literature, theater, and life; the worship of science, or at least the pleasure-causing results of science; and, above all else, the "secular religions of a Book," meaning here the religions that have been built around such books as *Das Kapital, Mein Kampf,* and *The Little Red Book.* (Ellul notes the decline in intellectual level from the first-named to the last, finding some humor in the fact. In our day, "Sacred Scripture is accepted without any requirement as to content": "*Mein Kampf* is obviously much below the level of *Das Kapital,* and *The Little Red Book* is the lowest of all.")

In sum, far from living in a secular world, one stripped by history of myth, ritual, and symbol—that is, the sacred—we are in fact, Ellul tells us, living in the presence of *les nouveaux possédés.* It is their very power to create all the fundamental states of mind that go with religion, to fulfill the functions in the social and psychological spheres that have been immemorially linked with religion, and to supply actual meaning or purpose in life that makes sex, violence, narcotics, irrationalism, and the kind of power embodied in a Maoist China or in a terrorist group into forces that will never prove amenable to ordinary means of control or obliteration. They are as much elements of the sacred in the present world as are any of the rites and symbols we find in conventional religion. Ellul asks: Will the new demons become desacralized? "Desacralizing could be done only if, along with it, one supplied a reason for living adequate really to sustain life, and an answer really satisfying and clear." Although Christianity has been "mongrelized since the seventeenth century," it is, Ellul continues, at least possible that a rescue of Christianity based on the theology of Karl Barth, rather than on "current pitiful efforts," will make possible this desacralizing of the present order. "It is possible that Christianity may be passing through fire from which it should emerge purified, but that is not at all certain."

There is little to provide hope or succor in *The New Demons.* Many readers will be unimpressed by Ellul's single-minded concentration on the pivotal role of Christianity, or rather of dechristianization, in his synthesis of Western past and present, though it is hard to think of any civilization more deeply saturated by the ideas and forms of one religion than the West has been saturated for two millennia by Christianity. But it is unlikely that any reader, however reluctant he may be on this point, will be unimpressed by Ellul's analysis of modernity and of its recent passage into the realm of the mythic, the transrational, and the sacred. Accepted or rejected as a whole, the book is still an eloquent, deeply reasoned, often profound indictment of an epoch.

Cave-side Manner

THE HEALING HAND. *By Guido Majno. Harvard University Press. $25.*

Reviewed by JUNE GOODFIELD

Guido Majno, an Italian by birth, is chairman of pathology at the University of Massachusetts Medical School at Worcester,

JUNE GOODFIELD is professor of philosophy and medicine at Michigan State University. In addition to scholarly work on the history and science of medicine, she has also written extensively to increase public understanding of science. Her most recent book is *The Siege of Cancer.*

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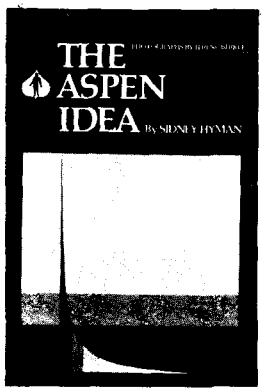
and with this book he has produced a real labor of love. He says he wrote it by accident. "It was going to be a preface to a monograph on inflammation, which is more properly my field, and the preface took over." It was a happy accident, for—ten years and hundreds of friends, colleagues, and correspondents later—we have a charming and erudite account, beautifully illustrated, of man's earlier attempts to treat and understand wounds. Amateur historian Majno may be, as he insists, but he has scrupulously searched for the existing records, probed them deeply, assimilated them with delight, and transmuted them through his own cultivated mind with humor and learning. So while this book is derivative in a very fundamental sense, it is nevertheless a most valuable scholarly document and, in strict fact, it is not totally derivative either. For with a scientist's curiosity Majno tested many of the old experiments and prescriptions, not in an empirical manner alone, but with a well-defined question in mind: Did the early healers benefit the patients or merely hasten their trip to the grave? Some of the answers may surprise us. I am glad that my own long-standing predilection for honey and wine has now received a degree of therapeutic backing.

Professor Majno begins his story quite literally at the beginning. After a short account of the processes of wound healing suitable for the medically ignorant, we take a look at the fossil record, at those animals that discovered both the joys and the pains of bashing skulls with clubs. He sums up the history of the first wound with a typically humorous characterization of primitive man as "a stone chipping artisan over a somewhat faded image of Cain." But then he goes on to show how the hand that hit could also be the hand that healed, calling on recent ethological evidence, such as Jane Goodall's classic observations of chimpanzees. A most remarkable illustration shows one chimpanzee extracting a foreign body from its mate's eye; in another, two engage in primary dental care. Social grooming, recognized as a genuine behavior trait, can be used not only for hygiene but also for aid, and the comfort of the touching hand has roots deep in our evolutionary past. Judging from the evidence, prehistoric man even did



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trepanning with a 100 percent success rate, and in the wilds it is still a relatively safe procedure. By the year 1800, however, it was a highly feared and seldom done operation with an almost 100 percent mortality rate. Primitive man may have wounds, but he does not have that scourge of early urban living, infection.

When Majno turns to Mesopotamia he accomplishes a major personal tour de force. Here we find the first written records—and so we are introduced not only to theories and precepts, to the subtle balance between craft and magic, but also to hieroglyphics and cuneiform script. Majno has mastered all this, and in one of the most demanding chapters we follow a medical and etymological analysis. Majno is even willing to add his own interpretations to the record from the point of view of a medical practitioner. This tour through Mesopotamian medicine has the dual fascination of a chess game and a detective investigation. For example, Majno writes:

> And now for the wound drugs. Put yourself in the place of an Egyptian patient: here comes the swnw and smothers your wound with an unspeakable green mush. Would you not want to know whether the stuff has a fighting chance to do you good?
>
> The first question, of course, is to determine whether we have a fighting chance to find an answer. The odds against making any sense of Egyptian pharmacy (or of ancient pharmacy in general) are huge. In the first place, what *did* they use?

To answer this last question, he takes us through items in the pictorial written pharmacopoeia and lays bare two perils: relating their words to *known* plants and the temptation to connect two words in texts that may have been two thousand years apart.

In a similar fashion, Majno draws the medical fabric of Alexandria, China, India, and of Rome where, with the physician Galen, we move forward not at all, but to a period when medicine and surgery either marked time or positively declined. During the Middle Ages, "medical theory acquired still new layers, of no advantage to medicine." In each of these places, detailed descriptions and analyses are provided whose scholarship and humor hold us to the very end.

This is a book to delve into piece by piece, time and again. We must surely be grateful to the centuries of medical experience—that amalgam of craft and science—that enables us now to accept a doctor's ministrations with a degree of confidence. But nevertheless the early civilizations still have something to teach us—and physicians. Majno describes the thirty-two volumes of Pliny's *Natural History* as a "ghastly marathon." Though indeed in his native Como Pliny may be "unjustly remembered for the poorest of those 20,000 facts" that he assembled there, he also wrote:

> I do not indeed hold that life ought to be so prized that by any and every means it should be prolonged. You holding this view, whoever you are, will none the less die. . . . Of all the blessings given to man by nature none is greater than a timely death.

I have been writing this review at the time of the Karen Quinlan case.

Repressing Freud

SOCIAL AMNESIA: A CRITIQUE OF CONFORMIST PSYCHOLOGY FROM ADLER TO LAING. *By Russell Jacoby. Beacon Press. $8.95.*

Reviewed by PAUL ROAZEN

Twenty years ago Herbert Marcuse published an important critique of so-called revisionist Freudian psychology. With great polemical skill Marcuse punctured the inspirationalist pretensions of writers who had tried to update psychoanalytic thought. Marcuse had turned to a serious examination of Freud during the late thirties, when he felt forced to reformulate Marxist premises. Bourgeois society had survived economic crises; the proletariat was susceptible to fascist appeals; and Russia, both domestically and internationally, had not fulfilled revolu-

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tionist hopes. In his *Eros and Civilization* (1955), disclaiming an interest in the clinical side of psychoanalysis, Marcuse selectively picked those concepts from within orthodox Freudian writings which might support his purposes. Relying on what he called a "hidden trend" in psychoanalysis, Marcuse tried to demonstrate the feasibility of a nonrepressive society. He maintained that Freud was the true revolutionary and that Freud's cause had been betrayed by those who diluted his message for socially conservative purposes.

Russell Jacoby has extended Marcuse's thesis. In a thought-provoking book, Jacoby rakes over writers from Alfred Adler to R. D. Laing who, he holds, have inadvertently lent support to the status quo by proposing idealist ethics. Like Marcuse, whose endorsement appears on the cover of this book, Jacoby believes that what is historically specific to capitalism need not be universalized as essential human nature. Freud is valuable because he exposed the hypocrisy of traditional values; he knew, according to Jacoby, the fraudulence of liberal individuality and the depth of social injustice. In contrast to what he views as Freud's approach, Jacoby considers the revisionists to have spiritualized social injustice. Their efforts to "humanize" psychoanalysis have supposedly dissolved its cutting edge. To Jacoby, the standard of "authentic" human relationships, as in Laing's existentialism, reinforces the power of social domination within the depths of the psyche. Jacoby proposes these theses, and argues that because of social amnesia Freud's true message has been repressed; psychoanalysis, in the guise of reform, has been put to reactionary social purposes.

It is surprising that this is the work of a historian, as Christopher Lasch points out at the beginning of his introduction. But unfortunately Lasch, who criticizes fellow historians for having tried to see Freud as a man of his times, tells us he is tempted "to argue that historical understanding of Freud has to begin with loyalty to his basic concepts." Lasch's opponents are supposedly unhistorical, writing "empirical" history. In these terms, though, Marcuse would also have to be considered unhistorical, since he sought to relativize Freud as the embodiment of one phase of capitalist development.

The central problem for practicing historians is that Jacoby makes comments like "it can hardly be maintained that the orthodox Freudians have simply been content to repeat Freud, fleeing any change as heresy—nor that Freud himself suppressed innovations." But this contention has indeed been made, precisely by neo-Freudians trying to revise psychoanalysis; and Jacoby, in attempting to refute it, does not examine the evidence and feels no need to develop an argument. (Franz Alexander—who is often considered a neo-Freudian and was favorably cited by Marcuse—is excluded from Jacoby's attack.)

In reality, however, Freud was more disturbing than those who fancy themselves hardheaded are willing to admit. At times he could explicitly identify himself with the devil. Twice he challenged the maxim "Love thy neighbor as thyself" as both morally undesirable and psychologically unrealistic. Freud was trying to overturn the traditional ethics of Western Christendom. As an alternative he had in mind a new morality, not radical social change. He was horrified by Wilhelm Reich's attack on the traditional bourgeois family and by the uses of Marxism in psychoanalysis; his *Civilization and Its Discontents* was a reply to both.

Politically, Marcuse's tortuous philosophic reasoning about Freud amounts to romanticization. Jacoby contends that "Freud's subversiveness is derived from his concepts and not from his stated political opinions." Jacoby ignores the evidence from so-called empirical history that could amplify this point. In his old age Freud supported a clerical and authoritarian regime in Austria that put down the socialists in a civil war. Marcuse might be shocked to learn that Freud could not only flatter Mussolini by inscribing a copy of *Why War?* to him, but could entertain, as a hope, the mistaken idea that one of his own disciples had direct access to the Italian dictator.

Moderate and pro-Establishment, Freud was, as Jacoby acknowledges, an old-fashioned liberal. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud expressed his sympathy for the aristocratic leaders of the *ancien régime* who suf-

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fered from the French Reign of Terror. Jacoby, however, de-emphasizes Freud's right-wing tendencies and, curiously enough for a supporter of the Frankfurt school of critical sociology, ignores the latent bias of Freud's protest, "Politically I am just nothing." Jacoby does quietly tell us, in contrast to the polemical tone of the rest of the book, that "evidently Freud was not arguing from a left position. . . ."

Jacoby's capacities are shackled by his ideological purposes. He has chosen to attack R. D. Laing and Erich Fromm for the sake of purifying socialist radicalism. Although he lists concepts like identity and identity crisis among revisionist mistakes, he tactfully omits Erik H. Erikson's name from this book. Erikson's psychology has explicit conservative sides to it; but then Lasch's introduction praises Erikson's historical work. Jacoby does not state a principle of selection in explaining his choice of writers to criticize.

Marcuse misunderstood the power structure within psychoanalysis: the more orthodox analysts have exerted a professional weight that a "deviant" like Fromm has never had. Marcuse was right in accusing his opponents of verging on social Pollyannaism. But he failed to understand the clinical grounds on which these writers had chosen to abandon traditional Freudian principles.

Jacoby's book also ignores the clinical literature. He focuses on the contrast between therapy and radical politics. But the contrast the revisionists had in mind was between decent and poor therapy, and this distinction need not entail social quietism. Jacoby writes in praise of a dialectical tension between psychoanalytic theory and therapy. But this disjuncture has often led to a hypocritical gap between what "orthodox" analysts profess and what they are sometimes willing to do in practice. He concedes the legitimacy of therapeutically aiding the victims of our society, as long as this does not glorify them or confuse therapy with revolutionary social change. But in attacking Laing's approach to schizophrenia, Jacoby mentions no rival clinical theories. He regards Laing as too abstract in treating the family apart from society, and in this he may be right, but, presumably, he would find existing alternative approaches to treatment even harder to swallow. He seems to assume naïvely that the clinical literature is littered with effective therapies. The tolerance that he does extend to Laing, however, would also seem appropriate for earlier psychoanalytic reformers.

Despite the cosmopolitanism of the Frankfurt school, this book is curiously ethnocentric. In keeping with his tone of admiration for the underdog, Jacoby believes it is not an advantage to be a Marxist today. While this bias may be true for most North American circles, it does not extend to the whole of the contemporary world. In general, Jacoby fails to see weaknesses in the Frankfurt school. For example, he feels under no obligation to discuss what human nature might be like under a social structure emancipated from capitalism.

Furthermore, since Marcuse years ago criticized Jean-Paul Sartre, that is the end of the matter for Jacoby. Yet Sartre has written with considerable savvy about the threats to autonomy in psychoanalysis, as well as its other inadequacies. Nor does Jacoby question Marcuse's version of the psychoanalytic concept of perversion, or Freud's view of femininity. (According to Martin Jay's history of the Frankfurt school, not even Theodor Adorno or Max Horkheimer could share Marcuse's particular reading of Freud.)

Dogmatism mars this book. After having attacked Adler, for example, Jacoby tells us that the Adlerians may be right, "substantively, if not factually." A victim of the amnesia he writes against, Jacoby proclaims toward the end of his book the conviction that "chronic disease . . . is not a biological statement about the poor, it is a social statement." Adler said much the same thing over half a century ago. Prefabricated slogans, which Jacoby links to commonsense psychology, can also be a product of critical theory. He shares the cultism he bemoans as a reaction to our society.

This stimulating book is written with verve and intelligence, and, unlike much socialist literature, it takes the theoretical implications of depth psychology seriously. Yet it is unfortunate that a Marxist critique of middle-class psychology ultimately has to be self-satisfied.

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The Reader Replies

THE READER REPLIES *carries miscellaneous comments by readers and authors on various articles that have appeared in the magazine. All communications should be addressed to: Editor,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *1811 Q Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20009. Because of space limitations we cannot guarantee to print all letters received.*

—EDITOR

The Media Shangri-La

Much is wrong with the media, but apart from an occasional insight, Tyrmand's "The Media Shangri-La" (Winter 1975/76) does little to reveal the major problems. The essay is an intemperate diatribe of insidious intent. Vague denunciations are justified by pure bigotry, and the rare insights are supported by too few examples. Sophisticated pretenses are poor substitutes for quantified facts or cases. But when the CIA is defended as a "weapon that protects . . . liberty, . . ." one should question his senses or his motives! But most puzzling is his failure to follow through with the logic of his arguments. Why does he omit an explicit defense of those co-defenders of "decency and correctness," Agnew and Nixon? Were they not innocent victims of the media's persecution? Or would such a defense reveal too much? That essay, together with Quinton's view of current British politics, was too rabid a reactionary fare for my "left-liberal bigotry" to swallow.

Searching your past for something to restore my faith in the SCHOLAR, I reread Gerald W. Johnson's "The Turkey Gobler Strut" (Autumn 1972). It was a real treat, and my mind's eye could not refrain from transforming it into sheer prophecy as the last word "Humphrey" was replaced by "Nixon"!

As for the Pentagon Papers and the question of prior restraint of the press, I fear that both Tyrmand and his adversary, the *New York Times,* have missed the point. The *Times* actually delayed publication until its appeal could be heard by the Supreme Court. The Court, forced into the position of a censor, gave it "permission" to publish. A free press would ignore the lower court order, publish first, and then take its chances with the higher courts. The Supreme Court should not have been ruling on the *Times's* right to publish the Pentagon Papers, but on the validity of the lower court's citation for contempt. But the *Times* was afraid to take a chance, and thus compromised its freedom. There is no institution of government, not the executive, nor the legislative, nor the judiciary, that should control when or what the newspaper publishes. There are no guarantees to our freedoms beyond our resolve to exercise them or our courage to defend them. Many an individual journalist has displayed that courage, but the media as an institution is so controlled by the business and commercial interests that use it, that it sees no profit in taking chances. This essential aspect of the problem was ignored by Tyrmand.

A free press would publish and broadcast the truth until the Police came pounding at its doors. The essay refers to Jefferson as an "imprecise idealist," but to me, that is just what Jefferson meant, when, as a very practical revolutionary, he led the Congress of 1776 to their simple and precise pledge: "our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

MARTIN HERTZBERG
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

MR. TYRMAND replies: The differences between Mr. Hertzberg and myself transcend points of view; they concern concepts of existence and morality. I see mine as ruled by reason and civility, while Mr. Hertzberg seems to see his as the domain of passion. This gives him an unfettered sway over unqualified adjectives: according to his feelings, what I do or am is *rabid, vague, insidious, reactionary.* When it comes to self-definition, however, he resorts to quotation marks, coquettishly intimating that a left-liberal bigotry is either an absurdity or a beautiful thing. But is it, really? Apart from degrading my text, Mr. Hertzberg also insinuates that by defending the CIA I'm either a dimwit or motivated by something other than logic. Whatever it is, an intellectual argument or a figment of excited nerves, it does not disprove my contention that, in spite of the agency's inventory of unsavory methods and transgressions, the CIA is a weapon that protects our

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liberty. Mr. Hertzberg will have terrible problems proving that it is otherwise, unless he chooses to demonstrate that America is not a free country, and thus what the CIA defends is not liberty. Orwell comes to mind when he wrote that, after 100 years of slander, the Home Fleet, that arch-demon of the British Left, had become the latter's last rampart against Hitler.

At the end, Mr. Hertzberg reveals that it is the subliminal that determines his stance. He exhorts the free press to do its thing until "the Police" pound at its doors. What Police? Why a capital P? Isn't this a dream about mythic symbols which could reactivate and justify gales of bathetic rebelliousness, now without a cause? But what has it to do with today's America? Who knocks at whose doors here? Who is scared of whom these days—the press of the police, or the police of the press? In ontology, Mr. Hertzberg's phenomenon is called the intentional inexistence. In practice, it shows that he and I live in two different countries.

* * *

Leopold Tyrmand's "The Media Shangri-La" served at least one purpose. It made me long for the good old days when generalizations such as his needed to be supported in writing with facts. Without such support, how do I know his essay is not the most repugnant factoid of all?

MARTIN BARON
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

MR. TYRMAND replies: If Mr. Baron seriously means what he wrote, he's wasted his time on reading me. I did not set out to report facts but to present an argument. Generalization, before being condemned as an intellectual sin, must be proven wrong. I feel a deep respect for facts, but the "fact equals truth" equation seems to me a bit primitive.

* * *

Leopold Tyrmand may be right in his main contention, that the public increasingly hates its communication media, but he is quite wrong in his premises. Most daily newspapers in the United States are conservative, not liberal, and one of the complaints of the critics of our journalism is that it too closely reflects the economic interest of its time and place. Mr. Tyrmand alludes to the *New York Times,* as everyone does, but seems unobservant of the *New York Daily News* with its tremendous circulation, the *Chicago Tribune,* or so many others. There are not more than ten or a dozen outspokenly liberal and able daily newspapers.

What he is getting at seems to be the fact that the ablest and most influential newspaper writers are liberals. Well, what does he want to do about that?

"Liberal," even so, is not a reliable tag. That eminent figure, Walter Lippmann, was taken in by one of the "new" Nixons, and advocated his election eloquently.

The limitation upon diversity of opinion, as represented by newspapers dedicated to particular schools of opinion, is a result of the technology, economic compulsion and complex society which have restricted almost all cities, and smaller places too, to a single newspaper. This being the hard fact, it would seem that providing a forum for all shades of opinion, as the *New York Times* does on its page opposite the editorial page and in its letter column, is about the best adjustment we can expect, even though the slugging may not be as much of a Donnybrook as Mr. Tyrmand would like.

He and many of us should have lived in an earlier time, but even when there were many newspapers of great diversity of opinion, the citizen negated the situation by reading only the paper with opinions that agreed with his own.

HENRY BEETLE HOUGH
Edgartown, Massachusetts

MR. TYRMAND replies: I didn't stage a trial against the liberals as an ideological faction, as Mr. Hough seems to have understood it, but, among other problems, rather attempted an insight into their doings within the realm of the media. Thus, even if most of the nation's dailies are conservative, they exist in the profound shadow of press services, syndicates, voguish magazines, radio and TV giants, which are fiercely, though not uniformly, liberal tastemakers and trendsetters. I don't think that the "ablest" writers are liberal nowadays, but I do think that the liberal culture imbued the American cultural climate with a brazenly hustled presumption that it is so. This is accomplished by the merciless everyday practice of imposing a bigoted cliché: *liberal* a priori means intellectually and morally *superior.* Such a catch enables editors to dismiss nonliberal views—not as opposing, but as *inferior.* He who wants to say something other than liberal on Angola or sexual permissiveness must expect that the official reason for rejecting him will not be philosophical divergence, but the lesser quality of what he believes in and how he writes about it. Making the nonliberal point featherweight and immaterial is a master stroke, but clearly from the totalitarian arsenal of dirty tricks, not too compatible with the democratic ethos. Mr. Hough appears to think

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highly of the *Times*'s Op-Ed page; but, to quote myself, it is dissent strictly under control, and if he were to submit something its editors intensely dislike, he would be informed that his views cannot be printed for they are not trenchantly outlined enough, thus do injustice to his own cause. Hypocrisy? Of course, but since social conscience replaced responsibility in American journalism's decalogue, it is called the liberal advocacy of noble goals and virtues. However, in that the "liberal is not a reliable tag," Mr. Hough has a point: the *Village Voice* does not stop branding the *Times* a tool of reaction.

Walter Lippmann

One doesn't expect inaccuracy from Richard Rovere—nor remarks of the sort expected to be found in a gossip column; I was surprised to see both in his recent article on Walter Lippmann in the Autumn issue of your publication (otherwise a remarkable profile of the distinguished man).

Both Walter and Helen Lippmann had been close friends of mine for the twenty-five years before their deaths. I would not have asked any writer to include the kind of personal details which Mr. Rovere suggests occurred.

I would be very happy if you would set the new records straight by publishing this fact, along with Mr. Rovere's comment.

FLEUR COWLES
Piccadilly, England

MR. ROVERE: "If my memory of our talk twenty-five years ago is incorrect, then I surely apologize."

The American Heritage and Its Guardians

Peter Shaw is quite interesting and convincing in his recent piece, "The American Heritage and Its Guardians" (Winter 1975/76). As a historical editor, I can bask in his appreciative words for my ilk. Nevertheless, Shaw is not clear about the real differences between the literary and historical editing projects. These differences, not the whirring blades of the attack helicopter, largely dictate the techniques, pace, and intellectual strategies of the historical editors.

The literary editors do have bodies of works in print; they seek for some ideal: a pure text. Although the historical editors may reprint publications or present the texts of unpublished writings intended for print, overwhelmingly they deal with materials in manuscript that are sometimes very scrappy and informal. In fact they have to gather thousands or tens of thousands of these bits of raw data from many depositories, domestic and foreign. This is no mean task. Then the raw bits are converted to print form, itself a formidable problem in many instances. At this point something further is required. The raw data largely transcends the printed secondary record, if any; it is almost like an archaeological uncovering of a lost society. Almost every bit of this raw data—all those scribblings on browning paper—requires a context. Sometimes the context is narrowly factual; more commonly, the context of even the most matter-of-fact annotation involves an interpretative element, explicit or otherwise. Boyd's Jefferson is Boyd's. The most successful of the editors reflect implicit or explicit editorial thrusts. Lack of a thrust guarantees a product of limited value.

Shaw is misleading in saying that fewer writings are in print. The number of volumes in the program is quite extensive and growing. Anyone may properly question the pace of the production or whether the results justify the costs. But the game is different; these volumes are not merely purified compilations of published writings as in the case of the literary figures. They contain largely unknown manuscript materials presented in terms of considerable original research. It is necessarily a longer process, but one producing an immense body of authentic historical information and interpretation.

Finally, Shaw seems unaware of recent developments within the historic editing program. First, to minimize costs and speed up dissemination of manuscripts, unedited microfilms of the originals are being produced; second, a number of projects (for example Henry, Webster) now combine selected letter press editions with accompanying comprehensive microfilm editions; third, very few projects expect to emulate the exhaustive editions of the Founding Fathers but will prepare extensive, yet selected, editions. Another development is likely—editions of papers dealing with representative institutions, and individuals, and groups, not merely with greats. The last is a logical extension of the genre without an analog in the literary editions. The letters and what have you of the greats necessarily contain references, passing or otherwise, to little-known individuals, and events, and trends. Scholars already use Boyd, et al., for unconventional topics. If I understand Shaw correctly, one of his complaints is that the literary editions are not usable in the same way.

NATHAN REINGOLD, Editor
Joseph Henry Papers
Smithsonian Institution

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MR. SHAW replies: Nathan Reingold's point is well taken. The historical editions do contain a considerable body of material that never before saw print, though I am not sure that this consists of "largely unknown manuscript materials." When I wrote that fewer writings are available today than at the turn of the century I did not take into account these newly printed writings. The point of my contention lay in the shocking fact that I could speculate: "it is possible that more [works] were in print at the centennial than will be at the bicentennial." And, of course, I had in mind the historical and literary editions taken together, where Mr. Reingold appears to be referring to historical editions only. With regard to these, if we except the new materials to which he refers and ask my question of the standard writings as they were presented in the nineteenth century editions—the letters, political tracts, and reminiscences of the statesmen—I believe the contention holds that fewer are in print today than at the turn of the century.

When Mr. Reingold speaks of unedited microfilms as a new development within the historical editing program I think he must mean that more microfilms are being produced more quickly, not that the whole process represents something new. The Adams Papers, at least, have been available on over 600 microfilm reels since 1956.

The Despairing Optimist

Contrary to the implication in the Autumn 1975 "Despairing Optimist" column that economics and economists are unable or unwilling to deal with the humanistic problems of enriching urban life, I must assert that we have been in the forefront of those making scientific attempts to provide useful, quantitative measures of such values.

Specifically, the argument presented is that contributions to the "quality of life" stemming from non-economic (or at least, not directly economic) phenomena should be considered in the formulation of macroscopic priorities. However, the fact that each individual, and each country, may have different ideas of that which constitutes a "satisfying life" does not imply that the value of the real resources required to obtain the list of desired attributes is irrelevant. Rather the truth is that we must, individually and collectively, become more careful and more complete "economists" in order to ensure the correct decision.

If we clean up our waterways and provide social improvements such as riverwalks, et cetera, to facilitate access, the costs are those things or activities which must then be foregone.

The existence of ugly and odorous bodies of water may stem from the past failure to take accurate account of the costs over time of allowing this event to occur, or from the conscious decision on the part of those decision-makers at that earlier time to discount the future benefits of clean water in favor of a slightly higher standard of living at that time.

What an economist *cannot* do, qua economist, is attack the utility or satisfaction values of various alternatives in the place of the elected individuals. What an economist *can* do is to ensure that these people and their elected or appointed proxies in a decision-making role are cognizant of the totality of the sources of costs and benefits of their actions.

It is precisely because all people are not the same, and because in the U.S. we cherish this individuality, that utility assessments are not straightforward. As economists, we can point out the conditions under which various proposed actions will likely add to the aggregate well-being, but the decision of whether these conditions do exist is *not* an economic one.

There is no a priori reason to expect that economists will ". . . object that improving waterways and waterfronts purely for the sake of urban enjoyment cannot be regarded as a serious compelling priority." Rather economists will point out that *if* the cleanup is to be done it will cost X dollars over some period of time, and must then leave it up to those with the power of the purse to decide, for their constituents, whether the probable non-economic benefits are comparable to those which must be foregone if these X dollars are spent in this way, rather than some other.

DAVID WHIPPLE
Monterey, California

The Opinionated Librarian

The sad state of our modern culture could not be more strikingly revealed than by the seven-page article "The Opinionated Librarian" (Winter 1975/76) whose author, a self-styled "bookish person," mentions the names and works of more than one hundred writers without referring to a single book of a scientific nature.

JOSEPH L. SNIDER
Professor of Physics
Oberlin College

ERRATUM

Owing to an error, the pages of the Winter issue were misnumbered. They should be numbered 1–160, whereas they were numbered 697–856. Accordingly, this issue is numbered 161–320.

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